MAY 7, 1921 15 CENTS

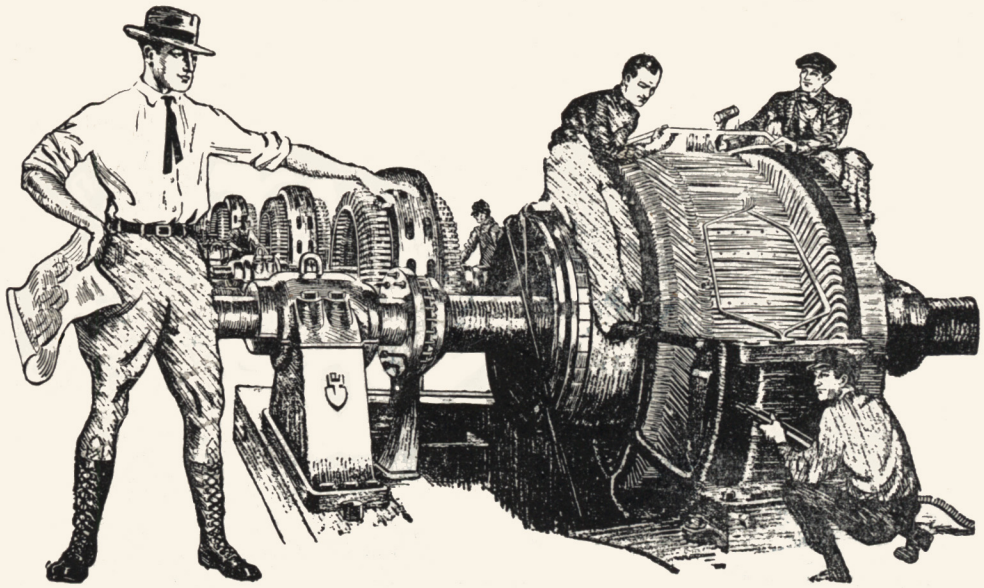
DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE

EVERY WEEK

Blind Men

by Edgar Wallace

Be a Certificated
"Electrical Expert"



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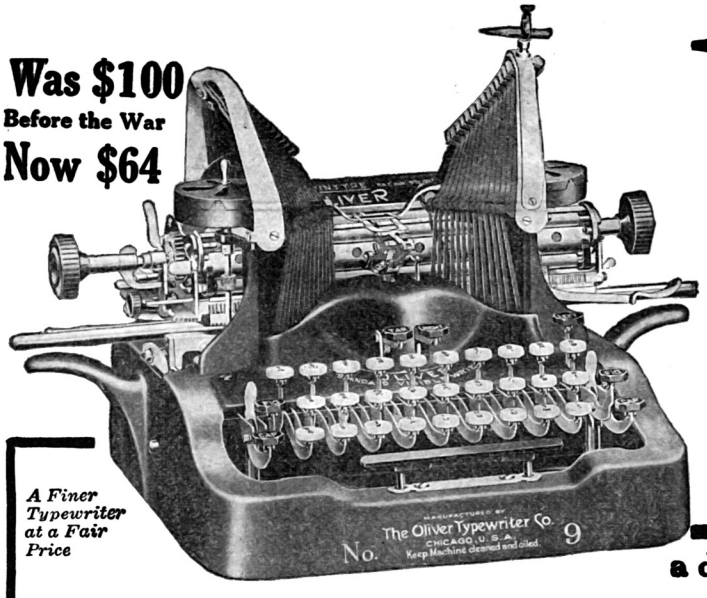

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DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE

EVERY WEEK

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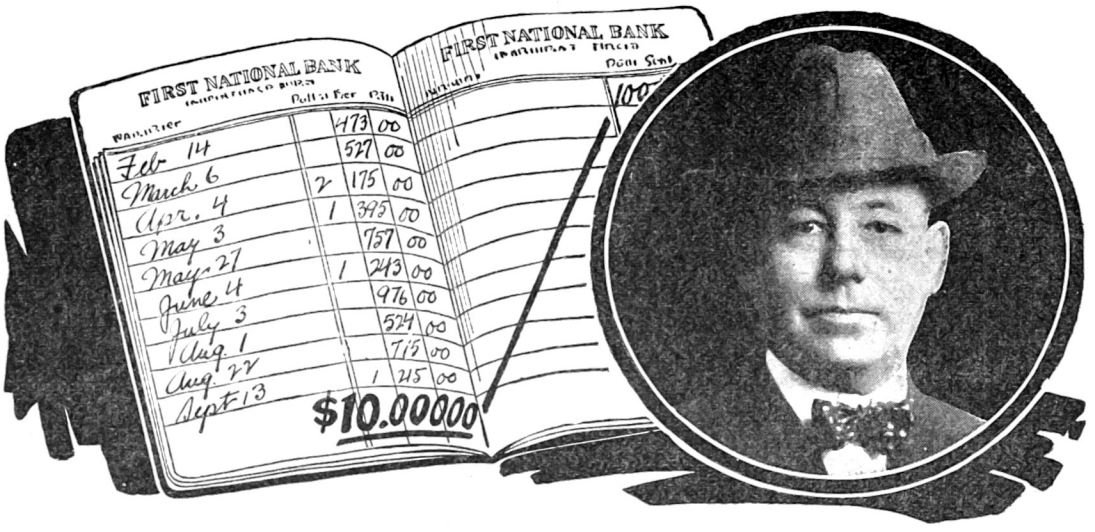

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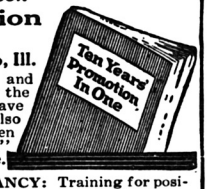

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DETECTIVE STORY
MAGAZINE
EVERY WEEK

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Blind Men

by Edgar Wallace

Author of "Jack o' Judgment," etc.

CHAPTER I.

LARRY HOLT IN PARIS.

LARRY HOLT sat before the Café de la Paix watching the stream of life flow east and west along the Boulevard des Italiens. The breath of spring was in the air; the trees were bursting into buds of vivid green; the cloud-flecked skies were blue; and a flood of golden sunshine brought out the colors of the kiosks and gave an artistic value even to the flaring advertisements. Crowded motor buses rumbled by, little taxis dashed wildly in and out of the traffic, to the mortal peril of unsuspecting pedestrians.

A gendarme, with cloak over his shoulder, stood in a conventional attitude on the curb, his hand behind him, staring at nothing, and along the sidewalk there were hurrying bare-headed girls, slow-moving old men, and marching poilus. Itinerant venders of wares loafed past the tables of the café, dusky-faced Arabs with their carpets on their arms, seedy-looking men who hawked bundles of picture post cards. All these things and people were a delight to Larry Holt, who had just returned from Berlin after four years' strenuous work in France and Germany, and felt in that holiday spirit to which even the mind of a detective will ascend.

The position occupied by Larry Holt was something of a mystery to the officials of Scotland Yard. His rank was inspector, his work was the administrative work of a commissioner, and it was generally understood that he was in the line for the first vacant assistant commissionership that came along. The question of his rank or his prospects did not trouble Larry at that particular moment. He sat there, absorbing the sweetness of spring with every breath he drew. His good-looking face

was lit up with the sheer joy of living, and there was in his heart a relief, a sense of rest, which he had not experienced for many a long day.

He revealed himself a fairly tall man when he rose, after paying the waiter, and strolled round the corner to his hotel. It was a slow progress he made, his hands in his pockets, his soft felt hat at the back of his head, a half smile on his parted lips as he gripped a long, black cigarette holder between his white teeth.

He came into the busy vestibule of the hotel, the one spot in Paris where people hustle and rush, where bell boys really run. He was walking toward the elevator when, through the glass doors leading to the palm court, he saw a man in an attitude of elegant repose leaning back in a big chair and puffing at a cigar.

Larry grinned and hesitated. He knew this lean-faced man, so radiantly attired, his fingers and cravat flashing with diamonds, and in a spirit of mischief he passed through the swing doors and came up to the lounger.

"If it isn't my dear old friend Fred!" he said softly.

"Slick" Fred, continental crook and gambler, leaped to his feet with a look of alarm at the sight of this unexpected visitation.

"Hullo, Mr. Holt!" he stammered. "You're the last person in the world I expected to see——"

"Or wanted to see," said Larry, shaking his head reproachfully. "What prosperity! Why, Fred, you're all dressed up like a Christmas tree."

Slick Fred grinned uncomfortably, but made a brave show of indifference.

"I'm going straight now, Mr. Holt," he said.

"Liar you are, and liar you will always be," said Larry without heat.

"I swear to you——" began Fred vigorously.

"If," said Larry without resentment, "you stood between your dead aunt and your failing uncle, and took a solemn oath, I wouldn't believe you."

He gazed admiringly at Fred's many adornments, at the big pin in his tie, at the triple chain of gold across his neatly tailored waistcoat, at his white spats and patent shoes, and then brought his eyes back to the perfectly brushed hair.

"You look fine," he said. "What is the game? Not," he added, "that I expect you to tell me, but it must be a pretty prosperous one, Fred."

The man licked his dry lips.

"I'm in business," he said.

"Whose business are you in now?" asked Larry, interested. "And how did you get in? With a jimmy or a stick of dynamite? That's a new line for you, Fred. As a rule, you confine yourself strictly to picking crumbs of gold off the unwary youth of the land —and," he added significantly, "in picking the pockets of the recently deceased."

The man's face went red.

"You don't think I had anything to do with that murder in Montpelier?" he protested heatedly.

"I don't think you shot the unfortunate young man," admitted Larry, "but you were certainly seen bending over his body and searching his clothes."

"For identification," said Fred virtuously. "I wanted to find out who did it."

"You were also seen talking to the man who did it," said Larry remorselessly. "An old lady, a Madame Prideaux, looking out of her bedroom window, saw you holding him and then saw you let him go. I presume he 'dropped.'"

Fred said nothing at first. He hated a pretended gentleman who descended to the vulgarity of employing the word "drop" for "bribe."

"That's two years ago, Mr. Holt," he said. "I don't see why you should

rake that thing up against me. The examining magistrate gave me a clean bill."

Larry laughed and dropped his hand on the man's shoulder.

"Anyway, I'm off duty now, Fred. I'm going away to enjoy myself."

"You ain't coming to London, I suppose?" asked the man, looking at him quickly.

"No," said Larry, and thought he saw signs of relief.

"I'm going over to-day," said Fred in a conversational tone. "I was hoping we'd be fellow passengers."

"I'm grieved to shatter your hopes," said Larry, "but I'm going in the other direction. So long!"

"Good luck!" said Fred, and looked after him with a face which did not indicate any desire for Larry Holt's fortune.

Larry went up to his room and found his man brushing his clothes and laying them out on his bed. Patrick Sunny, the valet he had endured for two years, was a serious young man with staring eyes and a round face, and he grew suddenly energetic on Larry's appearance.

Larry strolled to the window and looked down on the Place de l'Opera at the busy scene.

"Sunny," he said, "you needn't brush those dress things of mine. Pack 'em."

"Yes, sir," said Sunny.

"I'm going to Monte Carlo by the night train.

"Indeed, sir?" said Sunny, who would have said exactly the same if Larry had expressed his intention of going to the Sahara or the north pole.

"To Monte Carlo, Sunny!" Larry repeated buoyantly. "For six bright, happy, expensive weeks—start packing at once."

He picked up the telephone from the writing table and called the Travel Bureau.

"I want a sleeper and a first-class reservation for Monte Carlo by to-night's train," he said. "Monte Carlo," he repeated louder. "No, not Calais. I have not the slightest intention of going to Calais—thanks." He hung up the receiver and stood looking at his servitor. "I hate talking to you, Sunny," he said, "but I must talk to somebody, and I hate your name. Who gave you that horrible name?"

"My forefathers," said Sunny primly, continuing his brushing without looking up.

"They rather missed the bus, didn't they?" asked Larry. "For if there is anything less like a bright spring day than you I should like to avoid it. But we're southward bound, Sunny, to this Cote d'Azur, to the land of flowers and folly, to the orange groves—do you like oranges, Sunny?"

"I prefer walnuts, sir," said Sunny, "but fruit of any kind means nothing to me."

Larry chuckled and sat on the edge of the bed.

"We're going to be criminals and take people's money from them," he said, "instead of nosing about the criminal practices of others. No more robberies, defalcations, forgeries, and murders, Sunny. Six weeks of *dolce far niente.*"

"I don't play that game myself, sir," said Sunny. "I prefer cribbage."

Larry picked up the afternoon paper and turned its columns. There were quite a few items of news to remind him of his profession and its calls. There was a big bank robbery at Lyons, a mail coach had been held up in Belgium by armed robbers, and then he came to a paragraph:

The body of a man picked up on the steps leading down from the Thames embankment has been identified as Mr. Gordon Stuart, a rich Canadian. It is believed to be a case of suicide. Mr. Stuart had been spending the evening with some friends at the theater, and disappeared between the acts, and was not seen again until his body was

discovered. A coroner's inquest will be held in due course.

He read the paragraph twice.

"A man doesn't usually go out between the acts of a play and commit suicide—unless the play is very bad," he said, and the obedient Sunny said, "No, sir."

He threw the newspaper down.

"Sunny, I'm getting into bad habits. I'm taking an interest in lunacy, and for that same reason I notice that you've folded my trousers so that the crease comes down the side. Unfold 'em, you lazy devil!"

He spent the afternoon making preparations for his journey, and at half past six, with his trunks in the hands of the porters and Sunny carrying his overcoat, he was settling his bill at the cashier's desk, had folded up the receipt and was putting it in his pocket when a bell boy came to him.

"Monsieur Holt?" he asked.

"That's my name," said Larry, and looked suspiciously at the thing in the boy's hand. "A telegram?" he said. "I don't want to see it."

Nevertheless he took it in his hand and opened the blue paper with a disapproving grimace and read:

Very urgent, on special police service. Clear the line. Larry Holt, Grand Hotel, Paris.

Very worried about Stuart drowning. Case presents unusual features. Would be personally grateful if you would come over at once and conduct investigation.

It was signed by the chief commissioner, who was not only his superior but his personal friend, and Larry put the telegram in his pocket with a groan.

"What time do we arrive in Monte Carlo, sir?" asked Sunny when he joined him.

"About this day twelvemonth," said Larry.

"Indeed, sir?" said Sunny, politely interested. "It must be a very long way."

CHAPTER II.

FELLOW PASSENGERS.

SLICK FRED, whose other name was Grogan, had a genuine grievance; for, after he had been solemnly assured by a reputable officer of the law that he intended going to Monte Carlo, he had found him on the Paris boat train, and though he carefully avoided him he knew that Larry was well aware that they were fellow passengers.

At Victoria, Fred made a rapid exit from the station, not being perfectly satisfied in his mind that Larry's business in London was altogether unconnected with Fred's own activities. Larry saw the disappearing back of the crook, and smiled for the first time since he had left Paris.

"Take my things to the flat," he said to Sunny. "I'm going to Scotland Yard. I may be home to-night, I may not be home until to-morrow night."

"Shall I put out your dress things?" said Sunny. All that concerned him was the gentlemanly appearance of his employer. To Sunny the day was divided into three parts—tweed, broadcloth, and pajamas.

"No—yes—anything you like," said his master.

Larry drove straight to The Yard, and had some difficulty in making an entry because he was unknown to the local officials; but presently he was ushered into the big room where Sir John Hason rose from his desk and came across to meet him with outstretched hand.

"My dear Larry," he said, "it is awfully good of you to forego your holiday. Of course I knew you would come, and I've given you room forty-seven and the smartest secretary I have seen in Scotland Yard for many a day."

They were old friends and old schoolmates, John Hason and Larry Holt, and between the two men there

was an affection and a confidence which is rarely found between men in the same profession.

"I don't know forty-seven," said Larry, taking off his overcoat with a smile, "but I'll be happy to know the smartest secretary in Scotland Yard. What's his name?"

"It isn't a he, it's a she," and Hason smiled. "Miss Diana Ward, who's been with me for about six months and is really the cleverest and most reliable girl I've ever had working with me."

"Oh, a female secretary!" said Larry gloomily, then brightened. "What you say goes, John. I suppose she's got a voice like a file and chews gum?"

"She is rather unprepossessing, but looks aren't everything," said Sir John dryly. "Now sit down, Larry; I want to talk to you about this Stuart case," he began, offering his cigarette box to the other. "We only discovered yesterday that Stuart was a very rich man. He has been living in this country for nine months at a boarding house in Nottingham Place, Marylebone. He was a mysterious individual, who went nowhere, had very few friends, and was extraordinarily reticent. It was known, of course, that he had money, and his bankers in London, who revealed his identity when they discovered he was dead, were in his secret; that is to say, his secret so far as his identity is concerned."

"When you say he went nowhere, what do you mean? Did he stay in the boarding house all the time?"

"I'm coming to that," said Sir John. "He did go somewhere, and why nobody knows. Every afternoon it was his practice to take a motor drive, and invariably he went to the same place —to a little village in Kent, about twenty-five miles out. He left the motor car at one end of the village, walked through the place, and was gone for a couple of hours. We have made inquiries and we have discovered this, that he spent quite a lot of time in the church, an old Saxon edifice, the foundations of which were laid a thousand years ago. Regularly as the clock he'd return after two hours' absence, get into the car, which was hired, and be driven back to Nottingham Place."

"What was the name of the village?"

"Beverley Manor," said the chief commissioner. "On Wednesday night, departing from his usual practice, he accepted the invitation of a Doctor Stephen Judd to go to the first night of a new show at the Macready Theater. Doctor Stephen Judd is the managing director of the Greenwich Insurance Company, a small affair and quite a family concern, but having a pretty good name in the city. Mr. Judd is a genial person who dabbles in art and has a very beautiful house at Chelsea. Judd had a box for the first night of the show—Box A. Stuart came, and, according to Judd, was very restless. In the interval between the second and third acts he slipped out of the theater unobserved and did not come back, and was not seen again until we found his body on the Thames Embankment."

"What sort of a night was it?" asked Larry.

"Bright in the early part of the night, but rather misty and inclined to be foggy later," said Sir John. "The constable who was patrolling the beat where the body was found reported that it was very thick between half past three and half past four."

Larry nodded.

"Is there any possibility of his having mistaken his way in the fog and fallen into the water?" he asked.

"None whatever," replied Sir John emphatically. "Between the hour he disappeared and half past two in the morning The Embankment was entirely clear of fog, and he was not seen. It was a very bright night until that hour.

"And here is another curious circumstance," the commissioner went on.

"When he was discovered he was lying on the steps with his legs in the water, his body being clear—and," he added slowly, "the tide was still rising."

Larry looked at him in astonishment.

"Do you mean to say that he hadn't been deposited there by the falling tide?" he asked incredulously. "How could he be there, with his legs in the water, when the tide was low, as it must have been, when he came upon the steps?"

"That is my contention," nodded Sir John. "Unless he was drowned, immediately he left the theater, when the tide was high and was falling, it seems almost impossible that he could have been left on the steps at daybreak, when the tide was rising."

Larry rubbed his chin.

"That's queer," he said. "There's no doubt about his being drowned?"

"None whatever," replied the commissioner, and pulled open a drawer, lifting out a little tray on which were a number of articles. "These were the only things found in his pockets," he said. "A watch and chain, a cigar case, and this roll of brown paper."

Larry took up the latter object. It was about an inch in length and was still sodden with water.

"There is no writing on it," said Sir John. "I opened it when it first came in, but thought it better to roll it back and leave it as it was for another inspection when it dried."

Larry was looking at the watch, which was an ordinary, open-faced, gold one.

"Nothing there," he said, snapping back the case, "except that it stopped at twenty past twelve—presumably the hour of his death."

Sir John nodded.

"The chain is gold and platinum," said Larry, reflecting, "and at the end is a—what?"

There was a little cylinder of gold about an inch and a half long.

"A gold pencil fitted in here," said Larry. "Have they found the pencil?"

Sir John shook his head.

"No, that is all we discovered. Apparently Stuart was not in the habit of wearing rings. I'll have these sent to your office. Now will you take on the case?"

"But what is the case?" asked Larry slowly. "Do you suspect foul play?"

The commissioner was silent.

"I merely say that here are the elements of a terrible crime," he said finally. "But for the fact that he has been found on the steps with the tide still rising, and it was obviously low when he died, I should have thought it was an ordinary case of drowning, and I should not have opposed a verdict of accidental death if the jury reached that conclusion."

Larry looked at the watch again.

"It's strange," he said, speaking half to himself, and then: "I'll take these things into my room, if I may."

"I expected you would want them," said the commissioner. "Now will you see the body?"

Larry hesitated.

"I'll see Doctor Judd first," he said. "Can you give me his address?"

Sir John looked up at the clock over his mantelpiece.

"He will be at his office. He's one of those indefatigable persons who work late. Number Seventeen Bloomsbury Pavement; you can't miss the building."

Larry gathered up the tray and moved to the door.

"Now for the unattractive secretary," he said, and Sir John smiled.

CHAPTER III.

THE SECRETARY.

ROOM No. 47 was on the floor above that where the commissioner's office was situated. It lay at the end of a long corridor, facing the detective. He carried the tray in one hand

and opened the door with the other, walking into a comfortable little room.

"Hello!" he said in surprise. "Am I in the wrong office?"

The girl, who had risen from her desk, was young and extremely pretty. A mass of dull gold hair, dressed low over her broad forehead, gave an added emphasis to clear gray eyes that were regarding him with surprise. She was neat and slim of figure, and when she smiled Larry thought he had never seen a more pleasant one.

"This is Inspector Holt's office," she said.

"Good heavens!" said Larry, coming slowly into the room and shutting the door behind him. He went to the other desk and put down the tray, and the girl looked puzzled.

"This is Inspector Holt's office," she repeated. "Are those things for him?"

Larry nodded, looking at the girl in wonder.

"What is that?" he asked suddenly, pointing to a glass and a jug on a side table which was covered with a small white cloth.

"Oh, that is for Inspector Holt," she said.

Larry looked into the jug.

"Milk?" he said in wonder.

"Yes," said the girl. "Inspector Holt is rather old, you know, and when I asked the commissioner if he would like something after his journey, the commissioner suggested invalid's food and milk; but I can't make invalid's food here, and——"

His exclamation of merriment stopped her, and she stared at him.

"I am Inspector Holt," he said, becoming grave again.

"You?" she gasped.

"I'm the lad," he said complacently. "John—the commissioner has played a joke on you, miss—I don't know your name. Now would you be good enough to ask the aged Miss Ward to step in?"

A smile twitched her lips.

"I am Miss Ward," she said, and it was Larry's turn to stare. Then he put out his hand with a smile.

"Miss Ward," he said, "we're companions in misfortune. We've been equally victims of a perfidious police commissioner! I'm extremely glad to meet you—and relieved."

"I'm a little relieved, too," and the girl laughed as she went to her desk, and Larry, watching every movement, thought she floated rather than walked.

"Sir John said you were sixty and asthmatic, and told me to be careful that no drafts should come into the office. I've had a draft excluder specially fitted this afternoon."

Larry thought a moment.

"Perhaps it's as well I didn't go to Monte Carlo," he said, and sat down at his desk. "Now let us start."

She opened her book and took up a pencil, while Larry examined the trinkets that lay on the tray.

"Take this down, please," he said. "Watch made Gildman of Toronto, open-faced, jewel-balanced; No. A.778-432. No scratches on the inside." He opened the case and snapped it again, then tried the stem winder. "Wound less than six hours before death took place."

She looked up.

"Is this the Stuart case?" she asked.

"Yes," said Larry. "Do you know anything about it?"

"Only what the commissioner's told me," she replied. "Poor man! But I'm getting so used to horrors now that I'm almost hardened. I suppose one feels that way if one's a medical student. I was a nurse for two years in a blind asylum," she added, "and that helps to toughen you, doesn't it?" She smiled.

"I suppose it does," said Larry thoughtfully, and wondered how young she had been when she started to work for her living. He put her at twenty-one and thought that was a fairly gen-

erous estimate of her age. "Do you like this work?" he asked.

She nodded.

"I love it," she said. "Sir John says that one of these days he's going to make me a——" She hesitated for a word.

"A sleuth? Don't say you're going to be a sleuth," Larry said. "I thought we had this business to ourselves. Female competition to-day——"

She shook her head.

"You're neglecting your work, Mr. Holt," she said. "I've got as far as the watch."

He chuckled a little and resumed his inspection.

"Chain made of platinum and gold, length twelve inches, swivel at end, and container of a gold pencil—at least, I presume it was gold," he dictated. "The pencil wasn't found?"

"No," she said. "I particularly asked the sergeant who brought the goods whether the pencil had been found."

Larry looked at her in surprise.

"Did you notice that?"

"Oh, yes, I noticed that, too," Miss Ward said calmly. "The knife has gone, too."

He looked across at her in genuine amazement.

"What knife?" he asked.

"I guessed it was a knife," said she. "The swivel is too large to be attached to a pencil only. If you look you will see a little ring—it has probably got entangled with the ring holding the pencil. It was broken when it came in, but I pressed it together. It looked as if somebody had wrenched it off. I guessed the knife," she said, "because men so often carry a little gold penknife there."

"Or a cigar cutter?" suggested Larry.

"I thought of that," she said, nodding, "but they'd hardly have taken the trouble to nip off a cigar cutter."

"They?" he asked.

"Whoever killed Stuart," she said quietly, "would have removed all weapons from his possession."

He looked at the chain again and saw the other ring, and wondered why he had not noticed it before.

"I think you're right," he said after a further examination. "The ring is much larger—it had slid up the chain, by the way—and there are distinct scratches where the knife was wrenched off. Hm!" He put down the object on the table, and looked at his own watch. "Have you seen the rest of the things?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"I've only examined the watch."

He looked around for some receptacle and saw a cupboard in the wall.

"Is this empty?" he asked, and she nodded. "Then we'll leave the examination of these until I come back. I have to see somebody."

He slipped the tray into the closet and locked the door, handing the key to the girl. He was halfway to the door when he remembered.

"You won't be here when I come back? I suppose you have some sort of office hours?"

"I make it a practice never to stay after two o'clock in the morning," she said gravely.

She met the frank admiration in his eyes without embarrassment.

"I don't think I have ever met a girl like you," he said slowly, and as though he were speaking his thoughts aloud.

She flushed and lowered her gaze. Then she laughed and looked at him again, and he thought that her eyes were like stars.

"It may be that we have never met anybody like each other," she said.

And Larry Holt left Scotland Yard, conscious that a new and a very potent interest had come into his life.

CHAPTER IV.

SLICK FRED SEES A CLIENT.

SLICK FRED had seen Larry Holt off the premises of the railway terminus, for, though he had left the station building first, he had waited until Larry's taxi had gone.

He had a particular desire that he should not be shadowed that evening, and to this was engrafted a wholesome respect for the perspicuity and genius of Larry Holt. On the continent of Europe, wherever crook met crook, it was generally and unanimously agreed that the first person they wished to meet on the other side of the Styx was Larry Holt. The ruthlessness of this man, once he got his nose on to the trail, was a tradition and a legend, and Fred, more than any other man, had reason to fear him.

He gave Holt ten minutes' start, and then doubled back to the station, left his suit case at the cloak room, and came out at one of the side entrances where the cabs were waiting, and, choosing the first of these, he gave an address. Ten minutes later he was set down in a quiet Bloomsbury square, devoted in the main to lawyers' offices. There was an exception to these. The building at which he alighted was a narrow erection of red brick, and though no light showed in the lower office, there was a subdued gleam in the windows of the upper floor. An attendant on duty in the hall looked at Fred askance.

"The office has been closed for hours, sir," he said, shaking his head. "We open at nine in the morning."

"Is Doctor Judd on the premises?" asked Slick Fred, shifting his cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other.

The attendant hesitated.

"Mr. Judd is still busy, sir, and I don't think he wants to see anybody."

"Oh, you don't, don't you?" said Fred sneeringly. "Now you go upstairs to the governor and tell him that Mr. Walter Smith wants to see him. Don't forget the name—it's an unusual one," he added humorously.

The attendant looked dubiously at the visitor.

"I shall only get into trouble," he grumbled as he stepped into one of the two small elevators, and, pressing the automatic knob, he went quickly up out of view.

Apparently Doctor Judd's office was situated on the top floor, for it was some time before the whine of the motor ceased. After a while it began again, and the attendant descended.

"He'll see you, sir," he said. "Will you step this way?"

"You ought to know me by now," Fred said as he walked into the elevator. "I've been here pretty regularly the past few years."

"Maybe I wasn't on duty," replied the man as the lift slowly ascended. "There are two of us here, you know. Were you a friend of Mr. David's, sir?"

Fred did not chuckle, he did not even smile.

"No, no," he said airily, "I don't know Mr. David."

"Ah, very sad, very sad!" commented the attendant. "He died suddenly four years ago, you know, sir."

Fred did know, but he did not confess the fact. The death of Mr. David had robbed him of a possible source of income by right, whereas now he only had that income by favor, and might at any time lose that and gain a term of imprisonment if the jovial Doctor Judd grew tired of paying blackmail.

The elevator stopped and he stepped out and followed the attendant to a door, at which the uniformed man knocked. A loud voice bade them come in, and Slick Fred swaggered into

the handsome apartment with a cool nod to its occupant.

Doctor Judd had risen to meet him.

"All right, my man," he said to the attendant, and flicked a silver coin across the room, which the other caught deftly. "Get me some cigarettes," he said.

When the door had closed Doctor Judd said good-humoredly:

"I suppose you've come to get your pound of flesh?"

He was a tall, stout man, florid of face and heavy of build. His forehead was bald, his eyes were deep set and wide apart; he had about him an air of comfort and boisterous good humor. Fred, in no wise abashed, sat down on the edge of a chair.

"Well, doctor," he said, "I'm back."

Doctor Judd shook his head and searched his pockets for a cigarette.

"What do you want—a cigarette?" said Fred, reaching for his case, but the doctor shook his head and his smile was broad, good-humored, but significant.

"No, thank you, Mr. Grogan," he said with a chuckle. "I don't smoke cigarettes that are presented to me by gentlemen of your profession."

"What is my profession?" asked Slick Fred. "You don't think I was trying to dope you, do you?"

"I was expecting you," said the other, without answering the question, and seated himself. "If I remember rightly, you have a strong objection to taking checks."

Slick Fred grinned.

"Quite right, governor," he said. "That is still my weakness."

The doctor took a bunch of keys from his pocket, walked to the safe, snapped back the lock, and then, looking over his shoulder:

"You needn't watch this too closely, my friend; except when I have to pay blackmailers, I never keep money in this safe."

Fred made a little grimace.

"Hard words never killed anybody," he said sententiously.

The doctor took out a packet, slammed the door, and turned the key, came slowly back to the desk, and slammed down a fat envelope. Then he consulted a little book which he took from a drawer.

"You're three days ahead of your time," he said, and Fred nodded admiringly.

"What a brain you've got, doctor!" he said. "Yes, I'm three days ahead of my time, but it's because I've got to get out of England mighty quick to meet a friend of mine in Nice."

The doctor threw the packet across to him, and he caught it clumsily.

"There are twelve hundred pounds in that envelope. You needn't count them because they're all there," said Doctor Judd, and, leaning back in his chair, eying the other straightly and thoughtfully. "Of course I am the biggest fool in the world," he said, "or I would never submit to this iniquitous blackmail. It is only because I want to keep the memory of my dead brother free from calumny that I do this."

"If your brother goes shooting up people in Montpelier and I happen to be on the spot," said Slick Fred unctuously, "and help him to escape—as I did, and I can prove it—I think I'm entitled to a little compensation.

"You're an unutterable scoundrel," remarked the other in his pleasant way, and smiled. "And you amuse me. Suppose, instead of being what I am, I were a bad-minded man? Suppose that I was desperate and couldn't find the money? Why, I might—do anything!"

He guffawed at the thought of doing anything very terrible.

"It wouldn't make any difference to me," said Fred. "I've got all the facts written down about that shooting—how I helped the man escape and recog-

nized him in London as Mr. David Judd when I came back—and my mouthpiece has got it."

"Your lawyer?"

"Sure, my lawyer," said Fred, nodding. He leaned forward. "You know, I didn't believe your brother had died. I thought it was a fake to get me out of the way, and I shouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it in the papers and been to the funeral."

Doctor Judd rose.

"That a man like you could besmirch a name like his!" he said. All the good humor had gone out of his voice and he trembled with indignation and passion.

He had passed to the other side of the table and stood glowering down at Slick Fred, and Fred, who was used to such scenes—for this was not his first blackmailing case—merely smiled.

"He was the best man that ever lived, the cleverest, the most wonderful," said Doctor Judd, and his face was white. "The greatest man perhaps that this world has seen." His voice shook with the intensity of his emotion. "And for you——" He reached down, and before Fred knew what had happened the big hand had gripped him by the collar and jerked him to his feet.

"Here, none of that!" cried Fred, and strove to break loose.

"The money I do not mind paying," Judd went on. "It is not that which maddens me. It is the knowledge that you have it in your power to throw mud at a man——" Here his voice broke, and the other hand came up.

With a cry like a wild beast, Fred flung himself back with all his might and broke the grip of his adversary. Suddenly, as if by magic, there appeared in his hand a revolver.

"Put 'em up and keep 'em up!"

And then a voice, the gentlest voice in the world, asked:

"Can I be of any assistance?"

Fred turned with a start. Larry Holt was standing in the doorway, an engaging smile up his face.

CHAPTER V.

THE WILL.

SLICK FRED looked upon the intruder, a picture of comical amusement.

"You don't lose no time, do you?" The protest was forced from him, and Larry laughed softly.

"For carrying concealed weapons, you're pinched, Fred."

"It's no crime in this country," muttered the other, putting up his gun.

By this time Doctor Judd had recovered himself.

"You know our friend, Mr. Grogan," he said easily. "He's a member of our amateur dramatic society, and we were practicing a scene from the 'Corsican Brothers.' I suppose it looked rather alarming."

"Thought it was Julius Cæsar," said Larry dryly. "The scene between Cassius and Brutus, though I don't remember the gun play."

The doctor looked at Slick Fred and then at Larry.

"I'm afraid I don't know you," he said. He was still rather white, but his tone had recovered his good nature.

"I am Inspector Larry Holt from Scotland Yard," said Larry. "Now seriously, Doctor Judd, are you charging this man with anything?"

"No, no, no," Judd replied with a laugh. "Honestly, we were only doing a little harmless fooling."

Larry looked from one to the other. The managing director of an insurance company, even a small company, does not fool with a known criminal.

"You know this man, I suppose?"

"I've met him several times," said Judd easily.

"You know also that he's a member of the criminal classes, that he is in fact Slick Fred, who has served penal

servitude in this country and a term of imprisonment in France?"

The doctor said nothing for a while.

"I'm afraid I guessed that, too," he said in a low voice, "and in consequence my association with the man must seem rather curious to you—but I cannot explain."

Larry nodded. The one perturbed person in the room was Slick Fred. He was in an agony of apprehension lest Doctor Judd told his secret and the reason for his visit. But Judd had no such intention.

"You can go now," he said curtly, and Fred, trying to summon up some of his old swagger, lit a cigar with a hand that trembled, and Larry watched the operation.

"You want a tonic for those nerves of yours, Fred," he remarked scornfully. "I saw a druggist's shop open at the corner of the street when I came along."

Fred walked out with a pitiable attempt at indifference, and Larry watched him go. Then he turned to the doctor.

"I'm sorry I came in at such an inconvenient moment," he said, "though I don't think you were in any danger. Fred gets all his fine dramatic effects by aiming, not by shooting."

"I don't think so either," the doctor replied with a laugh. "Sit down, Mr. Holt. I certainly didn't expect to see you. I work rather late here at nights."

"There was nobody down below when I came," said Larry, "and that is my excuse for coming up unannounced."

The doctor nodded.

"I sent the attendant out to buy me some cigarettes, and here he is."

There was a tap at the door, and the attendant came in and laid a packet on the table in confirmation.

"Now what can I do for you?" asked Judd as he took a cigarette from the packet and lit it. "I suppose it is the Stuart case? I've seen one of your men to-day."

Larry nodded.

"It is the Stuart case," he said. "I wanted a few additional details. I've only just taken charge of the business, and interrupted my investigation of the body in order to see you before you left the office."

"I know very little," said the doctor, smoking comfortably. "He came with me to the theater the night before last. A queer, quiet, reticent man, I met him quite by accident. As a matter of fact, I was in a car that collided with his taxicab and I was slightly injured; he called upon me, and that is how the friendship began—if you can call it a friendship."

"Tell me about the night before last," asked Larry, and the doctor looked up at the ceiling.

"Now let me think. I can give you the exact time almost, for I am a somewhat methodical person. I met him at the entrance to the theater at seven-forty-five, and we both went into Box A. The box is on a level with the street, the stalls and pit being below the level. We sat there through two acts, and then, just before the curtain came down on the second act, he made an excuse and went out of the box and he was never seen again."

"None of the attendants saw him?"

"No," said the doctor, "but that, I think, is easily explained. It was a first night, and, as you know, the attendants are very interested in the action of a play, when of course they should be attending to their business."

"Did you know he was Stuart, almost a millionaire?" asked Larry.

"I hadn't the slightest idea," replied the doctor truthfully. "I knew nothing whatever about his past life except that he had come from Canada."

Larry was disappointed.

"I hoped I was going to get a lot of information from you," he said.

"Nobody seems to have known Stuart, and naturally I thought that you would have been in his confidence."

"Neither I nor his bank manager was in his confidence," said the doctor. "It was only this morning that I heard from the manager of the London and Chatham that he was a client of theirs. We knew absolutely nothing of his private affairs."

A few minutes later Larry was walking down Bloomsbury Pavement, and he was a very thoughtful man.

What had Slick Fred been doing in that office? What was the significance of that revolver and the white face of Doctor Judd? It was another little mystery, into which he had not time to investigate, and anyway it was no concern of his. Ahead of him his iron-shod stick tapping the pavement, was a man who walked slowly and deliberately. Larry passed him, and, waiting for a cab which he had signaled, saw him again.

"Blind," he noted casually, not interrupting his thought of Fred and the doctor.

But he had no time for side trails and side issues, and, entering the cab, he drove to Westminster.

He was not going back to The Yard immediately. First he had a gruesome duty to perform. At the Westminster Mortuary, whither the cab had taken him, he found two Scotland Yard officers awaiting him.

The examination of the body was a brief one. The only mark was an abrasion of the left ankle, and then Larry began an inspection of the clothing, which had been placed in an adjoining room.

"There is the shirt, sir," pointing to a garment which had been roughly folded. "I can't understand those blue marks on the breast."

Larry carried the garment under a light. It was a dress shirt, and the purple specks on the breast were clearly visible.

"Made by an indelible pencil," said Larry, and in a flash remembered the missing pencil case. But what did those specks mean, which formed three rough lines of indecipherable pot hooks and hangers?

And then the solution came to Larry, and quickly he turned the dress front inside out and uttered an exclamation. Written on the inside were three lines, and it was the indelible pencil markings which had soaked through that had caused the speckly appearance of the front of the shirt.

The water had made the purple pencil markings run, but the words were distinct:

In the fear of death I, Gordon Stuart, of Merryhill Ranch, Calgary, leave all my possessions to my daughter, Clarissa, and I pray the courts to accept this as my last will and testament. GORDON STUART.

Underneath was written:

It is now clear to me that I have been betrayed by——

There followed a letter which looked like a "O," but at this point the writing abruptly terminated.

Larry raised his eyes and met those of his subordinate.

"Here is the strangest will that has ever been made," he said in a hushed voice.

He put down the shirt and walked back to the mortuary chamber, and again examined the body. One hand was clenched. Using all his strength, he forced the fingers apart, and something fell with a tinkle to the stone floor. He stooped and picked it up. It was a broken sleeve link of a peculiar pattern. The center was of black enamel, the rim was of tiny diamonds. He made a further inspection, without discovering anything new.

Then he looked at his companion and his forehead was wrinkled. What did this mean? What association had

all these circumstances to each other? They could be connected, he felt sure of that—the strange encounter between Slick Fred and Doctor Judd, the will on the shirt, and now this new clew. An atmosphere of impenetrable mystery enveloped this case like a fog behind which strange and inhuman shapes were moving, dimly glimpsed and as dimly suspected.

Murder!

He knew it, he felt it—every shadowy shape he passed on his way to his office whispered the word "Murder!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE BLIND.

THE girl was making tea on an electric stove when he came in.

"Hullo!" he said with a start. "I had forgotten you," and she smiled.

"Tell me," he asked quickly, "did Stuart have any sleeve links?"

She nodded and took a small packet from her table.

"The commissioner forgot to send these on; they came in just after you left," she said.

He opened the paper. The links were of plain gold, without crest or monogram.

He took the enamel and diamond half link from his pocket and inspected it.

"What is that?" she asked. "Did you find it in——" She hesitated.

He nodded.

"I found it in his hand," he said quietly.

"Then it is murder, you think?"

"I'm certain," said he. "It will be most difficult to prove, and, unless a miracle happens, the villain who committed this crime will go free."

He opened the cupboard and took out the tray, adding to the collection the two gold links and the half link he had found in the dead man's hand.

"Nothing at all," he said, shaking his head. Then he remembered he had not examined the little roll of brown paper. "I don't know what this is; it was found in his pocket."

He flattened it out on the table, and the girl came to the opposite side and bent over, looking at the paper as he smoothed it out. It was a strip about four inches long and two wide.

"Nothing written here," he said, and turned it over. "Nor here. I'll have it photographed to-morrow."

"One moment," she said quickly, and took the paper from his hand, passing the tips of her delicate fingers over its surface.

He saw her face go white.

"I thought so," she whispered. "I was almost sure of that when I saw the embossing."

"What is it?" he asked quickly.

"There are some words here written in Braille—the language of the blind," she said, and again her fingers went over the surface, pausing now and again with a puzzled frown on her face.

"Braille?" he repeated in amazement, and she nodded.

"I used to read it when I was in the institute," she said, "but some of these words have been damaged, probably by the water. Some are distinct. Will you write them down as I spell them?"

He snatched up a pen, pulled a piece of paper from the rack, and waited. Even in that moment he thought how curiously the positions had been reversed, and how he had become the secretary and she the detective.

"The first word is 'murdered,'" she said. "And then there is a space, and then the word 'dear;' then there's another gap, and the word 'sea' occurs, and that is all."

With this weird message between them they stared at one another. What blind man amidst those blind shades which had mouthed and gibbered to him in the fog had sent this message?

What was there behind the ragged

scroll of soaked paper? Whose link did the dead man hold in his stiffened hand? Why was he murdered? There had been money in his pocket, his possessions were untouched. It was not for robbery that he had been struck down. Not for vengeance, for he was a stranger.

One fact stood out, one tangible point from whence Larry knew his future movements would radiate.

"Murder!" he said softly. "And I'll find the man who did it."

CHAPTER VII.

A TELEGRAM FROM CALGARY.

DIANA WARD was looking at her chief with a new interest in her fine eyes.

"Braille," he said in a low voice. "That is the written language of the blind, isn't it?"

She nodded.

"Yes, there are books and newspapers printed in that type," she said. "It is a sort of embossed character made of a number of small dots, the relation of one with the other producing the letter."

She took up the paper again.

"When blind people write, they use a small instrument and a guide, but this has been written in a hurry by somebody who worked without any guide. I can feel how irregularly it is done, and the words which I cannot read are due almost as much to bad writing as to the action of the water."

He took this curious clew into his hand and examined it.

"Could Stuart have done it with his pencil?"

She shook her head; then asked:

"Have you found the pencil?"

"No," said Larry grimly, "but I've found what the pencil was used for."

He opened the parcel he had brought in and showed the shirt and its tragic message written inside the front.

"Why inside?" he said thoughtfully. "It's written on the left, too."

Diana understood.

"It would necessarily be written on the left side if he used his right hand," she said.

"But why on the inside?"

She shook her head.

"I don't know. It would have been much simpler to——"

"I have it!" cried Larry triumphantly. "He wrote this will where it would not be seen by somebody or other. If it had been written outside, it would have been seen, and probably destroyed."

She shivered a little.

"I'm not quite hardened yet," she said with a smile. "There is something terrible about this, isn't there? I think you are right; and if we go on that assumption, that he wrote this will in such a manner in order to keep it from the eyes of a third person, we must suppose that that third person existed. In other words, there was somebody of whom he was afraid—or, if you like, at whose hands he feared death—and the murder was premeditated, for he must have been in the custody of that somebody for some time before he met his dreadful end."

She stopped suddenly, for Larry's eyes were fixed on her.

"You're rather wonderful," he said softly; "and if I'm not mighty careful I'm going to lose my job."

He saw a look of doubt in her eyes and laughed.

"Now, Miss Ward," he said banteringly, "we are going to start fair, and you must acquit me of any professional jealousy."

"Jealousy!" she echoed. "That would be absurd."

"Not so absurd," said Larry. "I've known men to be jealous of women for less reason. And now"—he glanced at his watch—"I think you had better go home. I'll get a taxi. Do you go far?"

"Only to the Charing Cross Road," she replied.

"Then I'll take you home," said Larry. "It's nearly one o'clock."

She had already started putting on her coat and her hat.

"Thank you, I'll go alone," she said. "It isn't far. Really, Mr. Holt, I don't want you to get into the habit of taking me home every time I'm late. I'm quite used to being out by myself, and I wont' have a taxi."

"We'll see about that," said Larry. He was writing rapidly on a cable form. "If I can get this cable through in time, it ought to reach the chief of police in Regina by supper time yesterday!"

"Yesterday?" she said in surprise. "Oh, of course; they are nine hours late on Greenwich time," and Larry groaned.

"I'll have to try some new ones on you," he said.

They walked home together, as it happened that the girl's tiny apartment lay in the direction that he had to take. Larry reached Regent's Park, where his own flat was situated, and found the patient Sunny laying out his pajamas.

"Sunny," said Larry later on as he sipped a cup of chocolate, "somewhere in this city is a very unpleasant gentleman, name unknown."

"I expect there are many like that, sir," said Sunny.

"And somewhere in Bolton, in Lancashire," Larry went on, "in a tiny barber's shop, is a quiet-spoken man who is known as the public executioner."

"I've got a brother who's a barber, sir," said Sunny.

"The man in London and the man in Bolton!" speculated Larry aloud. "And it's my job in life to bring them together!"

He was at Scotland Yard at half past eight the following morning, and to his surprise the girl was before him, and the departmental memoranda and the various documents which come to every head of Scotland Yard were neatly arranged on his blotting pad.

"A cablegram has just come in," said the girl. "I didn't open it. You must tell me what you want done about cables and telegrams."

"Open 'em all," said Larry. "I have no private business—and the only scented notes which come to me can be read without bringing a blush to the youngest cheek."

She came across the room with the cablegram in her hand and he took it.

"Calgary," he said, looking at the address. "That's pretty quick work." And then his mouth opened in amazement, for the telegram read:

Stuart had no child. He was not married.

He looked at the girl.

"Check number one," he said.

She took the telegram from him and examined the hour at which it was dispatched.

"This is a common-knowledge telegram," she said.

"What do you mean by common knowledge?" asked Larry.

"Well, it must have been answered just as soon as it arrived, and the man who sent this wrote from what is common knowledge. In other words, he didn't attempt to make any investigations, but took the fact for granted; probably he asked somebody in the office, 'Is Stuart married or a bachelor?' and when they said he was a bachelor he dispatched the reply."

Larry folded the wire and put it away in his desk.

"If it is common knowledge that Stuart was not married, it merely complicates a situation which is not exactly clear. Here is a man who dies and is obviously murdered, and in the few moments preceding his death writes his will secretly on the inside of his shirt. It is possible, by the way, that he may

have done this in the presence of his murderers without their being aware of the fact, and I should think that is most likely."

"I thought that," she agreed.

"He was murdered, and writes his will on the stiff breast of his shirt, leaving the whole of his property to his daughter. Now, a sane man—and there is no reason to suppose that he was anything but sane—does not invent a daughter on the spur of the moment; so it is obvious that the chief of the Calgary police is wrong."

"It is equally certain that if he was married, it was not in Calgary or even in Canada, where the fact would be known," said the girl. "Secret marriages are possible in a great city, but in small places, among very prominent people—and apparently he lived not in a town, but on a ranch—the fact that he was married could not escape knowledge."

On the way home the previous evening Larry had told the girl almost all that the commissioner had told him. It was not usual for him to make confidantes so quickly, but there was something very appealing about Diana Ward, and his confidence, usually a matter of slow growth, had flashed to maturity.

The girl was looking thoughtfully down at her desk.

"If he was married secretly," she said slowly, "would it not be—in——"

"In London, of course," said Larry, nodding. "Send a cable to the chief of the Calgary police, asking him particulars about Stuart's known movements, when he was in London last before his present visit."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEMORIAL STONE.

SHE nodded, took out a telegram form from her rack, and began writing. Larry glanced through the reports mechanically, initialed one, and put the others aside. Then he opened the cupboard, and, taking out the tray, carried it to the table. He examined the watch again in the light of day, the swivel ring, the cigar case, and lastly the roll of paper. By daylight the embossed characters were visible, and he put his finger tips over them very gingerly. He was not, however, accustomed to reading Braille, and he realized that his hand was a heavy one compared with the delicate touch of his secretary. She finished her writing, rung a bell, and handed the telegram to him to read.

"That's all right," said Larry, and when the uniformed messenger had come and taken the telegram away: "Do you notice anything peculiar about this piece of paper?" he asked, pointing to the Braille message.

"Yes," she said. "I was looking at it before you came. You don't mind?" she asked quickly, and Larry laughed.

"You can examine anything except my conscience," he said. "Did you notice"—he turned his attention to the paper again—"that one end of this paper is less discolored than the other?"

"I noticed that one end was dryer than the other last night," she said, "and that of course is the reason. It was on the dry end that we got our best results. For instance, the word 'murderer' was almost untouched by the water; it was damp, but not moist."

He nodded, and she opened a drawer of her desk and took out a sheet of brown paper.

"I brought this with me," she said. "It is a sheet from a Braille book, and I was trying experiments with strips I had torn from the book, soaking them in my washbasin. Here is the result." She took out a little roll of shapeless pulp, which skinned when she attempted to unwind it.

"Humph!" said Larry. They had both reached the same conclusion, but by different processes. She, by actual experiment, he by deduction; and the conclusion they had come to was that the roll of paper had been placed in Gordon Stuart's pocket after the body had left the water.

"There would be enough moisture in the clothes to saturate it through," said Larry. "This paper is very absorbent, almost as much so as blotting paper. So we have come to this—that Gordon Stuart was drowned, and after he was drowned his body was handled by some person or persons, one of whom slipped this message into his pocket, and that person was either a blind man or one who believed——" He stared at her. "By George!" he exclaimed as a thought struck him.

"What were you going to say?" she asked.

"Is it possible——" He frowned. It was an absurd idea. The man or woman who left this message on the body expected that Diana Ward would read it.

She held no official position, and the fact that she was Larry Holt's secretary was a purely fortuitous circumstance, which could not have been anticipated by any outside person. Yet a hasty telephone call to the chief of internal intelligence revealed the fact that there was no Braille expert at Scotland Yard, the only man who knew the system being at that time on sick leave for six months.

"I think you can dismiss the idea that the message was intended for me," said the girl with a smile. "No, it was not written by a blind man, or it would have been written better. A person with the use of his eyes, or——"

"Suppose they were writing in the dark?" asked Larry. He put the tray away and locked the cupboard.

The girl shook her head.

"If he were not blind, he would not be in possession of the instrument to make these markings," she said, and Larry felt that was true.

He spent two hours dictating letters to various authorities, and at eleven o'clock he rose and put on his coat and hat.

"We're going for a joy ride," he said.

"We?" she repeated in surprise.

"I want you to come along," said Larry, and this time his tone was authoritative, and the girl meekly obeyed.

There was a car waiting for them at the entrance to The Yard, and the driver had already evidently received his instructions.

"We're going to Beverley Manor, the village which Stuart was so fond of visiting," he said. "I particularly want to discover what attractions the old Saxon church had for this unhappy man. He doesn't seem to have been an archæologist, so the fact that the foundations were a thousand years old would not interest him."

It was a glorious spring day, with just a sufficient nip in the air to bring the color to young and healthy cheeks. The hedgerows were bursting into vivid green, and the grassy banks were yellow with primroses. They sat silent, this man and woman whom fate had thrown together in such strange circumstances, enjoying the golden day and thankful of heart to be alive in that season of renewal. All the world was living. The air was lively with hurrying birds, going about their business of nest-making. They saw strange, furtive shapes creeping across the road from burrow to burrow; and in one sheltered, Old World garden which they passed white lilacs were blooming.

Beverley Manor was a straggling village at the foot of the Kentish Rag. Beyond its church it had few attractions for visitors, for it lay off the

main Kentish road, a tiny backwater of rural England, where life ran a smooth, unruffled course.

They pulled up at the inn, where Larry ordered lunch, and then they set forth on foot to the church, which lay a quarter of a mile away along a white and pleasant road. It was not a pretty church; its square tower was squat and unlovely, and successive generations, endeavoring to improve its once simple lines, had produced a medley of architecture in which Romanesque, Gothic, and Norman struggled for recognition.

The door of the church was open, and the edifice was empty. However disturbing its outside might be, there was serenity and peace and simplicity in the calm interior.

Larry had hoped to find memorial tablets placed in the wall of the church which would give him some clew to Stuart's movements. But beyond a brass plate testifying to the virtues of a former vicar, and the tomb of an ancient bishop of Rochester, the church was innocent of memorials. Larry then began a systematic inspection of the graves. Most of them were very old, and their inscriptions indecipherable.

He came at last to the far end of the cemetery, where half a dozen workmen were carrying a new stone wrapped in canvas, and he and the girl stood side by side watching them in silence as they deposited their load by a well-kept grave.

"I'm afraid we've had our journey for nothing," said Larry. "We'll make a few inquiries in the village, and then we'll go back to London."

He was turning to go, when one of the men stripped the canvas covering from the headstone.

"We might as well know who this is," said Larry, and stepped forward to look.

The men stood on one side to give him a better view, and he read, and, reading, gasped.

To the Memory of
MARGARET STUART,
wife of
GORDON STUART,
(of Calgary, Canada)
Died May 4, 1899.
Also His ONLY Daughter Jeane,
Borne 10th June, 1898,
Died 1st May, 1899.

The girl had joined him now, and together they stood staring down at the headstone.

"His only daughter!" said Larry in a tone of bewilderment. "His only daughter? Then who is Clarissa?"

CHAPTER IX.

THE MAN WHO LOST A FINGER.

AN examination of local records produced no satisfactory result. Margaret Stuart had died at a farm three miles out of Beverley Manor, and the farm had changed hands twice since the date of her death.

"Twenty years ago?" said the farmer whom Larry interviewed. "Why, twenty years ago this place was a sort of nursing home. It was run by a woman who took in invalids."

Where the woman was he could not say. She was not a local woman. He thought he had heard she was dead.

"I've been racking my brains to recall her name," said the farmer. "I told the gentleman yesterday that he'd best go to Somerset House——"

"A gentleman here yesterday?" said Larry quickly. "Was there somebody inquiring yesterday?"

"Yes, sir, a man from London," said the farmer. "He came down in a car and offered me fifty pounds if I could tell him the name of the woman who kept this place as a home, and one hundred pounds if I could give him any information about a lady that died here

twenty-two years ago. A lady named Stuart."

"Oh, indeed!" said Larry, alert now. Nobody from Scotland Yard had made the inquiries, he was well aware. "What was this gentleman like who called yesterday?" he asked.

"Rather a tall man," said the farmer. "I didn't see his face properly because he had his overcoat buttoned up to his chin. But I did notice that he'd lost the little finger on his left hand."

On their way back to London both Larry and Diana Ward were absorbed in their own thoughts. The car was threading through the traffic of Westminster Bridge Road before Larry made any reference to their visit.

"Who is in such a frantic hurry to discover all about the Stuarts?" he asked. "And who is his daughter Clarissa, and how can he have a daughter Clarissa, when his only daughter lies at Beverley Manor?"

"You inquired at the stone mason's when we came through Beverley. Didn't they tell you anything?" asked the girl.

He nodded.

"The stone was put up by order of Mr. Stuart, who was in the habit of coming to the churchyard every day to sit beside the grave. The memorial was ordered two months ago, and the stone was seen and approved by Gordon Stuart only last week."

He bit his lip thoughtfully.

"Between last week and the night of his murder, Stuart must have discovered that he had another child." He shook his head. "That sort of thing doesn't happen," he said decisivly, "not in real life, anyway."

He spent ten minutes with the commissioner and afterward went into the City, and the girl did not see him till seven o'clock that night. She had had instructions from him that she was not to wait, as it was a Saturday and her office hours ended at one o'clock. But she was sitting at her desk, reading, when he came in, and he was so elated that he did not reprove her.

"I've got it!" he said exultantly.

"The murderer?" she asked with a start.

"No, no, the story of Stuart. Has there been any reply to my cablegram?"

Diana shook her head.

"It doesn't matter very much," he said briskly as he paced the office. "I've secured the registration of the marriage. It occurred in the Diamond Jubilee year, in August, 1897, and was celebrated at a church in Highgate. Don't you see what happened?"

"I don't quite see," she said slowly.

"Well, I'll tell you. Gordon Stuart, a young man at the time, was on a visit to this country. I have found that he stayed at the Cecil Hotel from June to August, 1897. He married the girl, whose name was Margaret Wilson, and returned to the Cecil Hotel alone in March, '98. There is a record there that he left for Canada two days after he came back to the hotel. They kept a book in which they write down the addresses to which letters should be forwarded, and there was no difficulty whatever in tracing his movements so far. Then I went to see the vicar of the church where he was married; and here I had a great find."

He paused, rumpled his hair, and frowned.

"I really should like to know who is that tall man who has lost the little finger of his left hand," he said irritably.

"Why?" she asked in surprise.

"He had been there a day before me," said Larry, and then, shaking off his annoyance: "Here is the story—the story told by Stuart to the vicar, whom he met in the Strand on the day before he sailed for Canada, never to return until he came back eight or nine months ago.

"The vicar married him, and remem-

bered the circumstances very well. He said Stuart was a very nervous and somewhat conceited man, who lived in terror of his father, a rich landowner in Canada. Stuart confessed to him over a cup of tea which they had together at the Cecil that he was leaving his wife and going back to Canada to break the news of his marriage to his father. He was in considerable doubt as to what his father would say. The impression left on the vicar's mind was that the old man would disinhert him. To cut a long story short, he said he was leaving London the next day, and at the first opportunity he should tell his father, and then he would return for his wife.

"There's no doubt in my mind," Larry went on, "that Stuart did not tell his father, that he kept the secret of his marriage carefully hidden, and in a panic at being found out he broke off all communication with his wife."

The girl shook her head.

"One doesn't want to judge the dead too harshly," she said, "but it was not a manly thing to do."

"I agree," said Larry. "He must have left his wife a considerable sum of money. At any rate, when the vicar saw her she was in comfortable circumstances and gave him that impression. Stuart left in March. In June, 1898, three months later, his child was born—the child he never saw, and about whom in all probability he never heard until years of remorse worked upon him and he came back to England to find his wife and establish her in the position to which she was entitled.

"He must have employed a detective. And the end of his quest was a discovery in the churchyard of Beverley Manor—the grave of his wife and his only child."

"What about Clarissa?" asked the girl, and Larry shrugged.

"That is mystery number two, which has got to be cleared up."

She was silent, this thoughtful girl, and her pretty brows were wrinkled in thought. Presently she put down the pen she had been so assiduously biting, and looked across at him with a slow, triumphant smile, a smile which found a ready response in his face.

"You've solved it?" he asked eagerly, and she nodded.

"You've solved the mystery of Clarissa?"

"I think it's one of the easiest of the problems to solve," she said calmly, "and I must have been silly not to have thought of it before. Have you the registration of birth?"

"I haven't got that; we're making a search for it to-morrow," said Larry.

"I can save you the trouble," replied Diana Ward. "Clarissa is the other twin daughter."

"Twins!" gasped Larry, and the girl nodded, her eyes dancing with merriment at his surprise.

"Obviously," she said. "Poor Mrs. Stuart had twin daughters. One of them died; the other is Clarissa, of whom Stuart learned, perhaps in the last few hours of his life."

Larry looked at her in awe.

"When you are chief commissioneress of the metropolitan police," he said, "I shall be very obliged to you if you make me your secretary. I feel I have a lot to learn."

CHAPTER X.

MR. STRAUSS SHELLS OUT.

SLICK FRED had not left London; he had no intention of leaving London, if the truth be told. He had certain doubts in his mind which he had determined to set at rest, certain obscurities on his horizon which he desired should be dispersed. Slick Fred was a clever man. If he had not been clever, he would not have lived in the excellent style he adopted, nor possessed chambers in Jermyn Street and a limou-

sine to take him to the theater at night. His working expenses were heavy, but his profits were vast. He had many irons in the fire and burned himself with none of them—which is the art of success in all walks of life.

On the evening of the day that Larry had made his discovery, Slick Fred, in the seclusion and solitude of his ornate sitting room, had elaborated a theory which had followed very close upon a discovery he had made that morning. Men of his temperament and uncertain prospects suffer from a chronic dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction is half the cause of their departure from the straight and narrow path, and is wholly responsible for their undoing. One hundred pounds a month, payable yearly, is a very handy income; but the underworld abhors anything that savors of steadiness, regularity, and system—three qualities which are so associated with prison life that they carry with them a kind of taint particularly distressing.

Twelve hundred pounds a year for five years is thirty thousand dollars—a respectable sum; but five years represents a big slice taken out of the hectic life of men like Slick Fred. Twelve hundred pounds at best represents only two coups at *trente et quarante,* and can be lost in three minutes.

Doctor Judd was a collector. It had been reported to Fred that Doctor Judd's residence at Chelsea was a veritable treasure house of paintings and antique jewelry. Fred had read a newspaper paragraph that Doctor Judd was the possessor of historical gems worth twenty-five thousand dollars. Though Fred had no passion for history, he had an eye to the value of precious stones. And the theory he had evolved was in the main arithmetical. If he could get away with fifty thousand dollars' worth of property in twenty-four hours, he would not only have anticipated his income for eight or nine years, but he would be saved the trouble of coming to London every twelve months to collect it. Much might happen in twelve months. It might not always be possible for him to make the journey, since prison authorities are notoriously difficult to persuade. Or he might be dead.

To get that movable property would be difficult, because the doctor was hardly the kind of man to leave his property unguarded. Indeed, the ordinary methods of effecting an entrance were repugnant to Fred's professional feelings. For he gained his livelihood by the cleverness of his tongue and the lightning adjustment of certain brain cells to meet emergencies; and to him a jimmy was an instrument of terror, since it implied work. But there was another method—and once he had made his get-away, would the doctor dare prosecute?

That afternoon, sauntering aimlessly through Piccadilly Circus at the midday hour, he had come face to face with a tall, stoutish man, who, after one glance at him, had attempted to avoid a meeting; but Fred had caught him by the arm and swung him round.

"Why," he said, "if it isn't old Two-seventy-eight! How are you, Strauss?"

Mr. Strauss' face twitched.

"I think you've made a mistake, sir," he said.

"Come off it," demanded Fred vulgarly, and, taking him by the arm, led him down Lower Regent Street.

"Excuse my not recognizing you," said Mr. Strauss nervously, "but I thought at first you were a bull."

"Well, I'm not," said Slick Fred. "And how has the old world been treating you, hey? Do you remember G gallery at Portland in B block?"

The face of the stout man twitched again. He did not like being reminded of his prison experience, though in truth he had little against the prisoner who had occupied the adjoining cell.

"How are you getting on?" he asked. And it happened that that morning Slick Fred had gone out without any visible diamonds—he carried them in his hip pocket, for he trusted nobody.

"Bad," said Fred, which was a lie, but no good crook admits that he is prosperous. Then suddenly: "Why did you think I was a stool pigeon, Strauss?"

Strauss looked uncomfortable.

"Oh, I just thought so," he said awkwardly.

"Are you at the old game?"

Fred looked at the other steadily and saw his eyes shift.

"No, I'm going straight now," he said.

"A liar you are, and a liar you will always be," said Fred, quoting Larry Holt. "I'll bet you're on the way to 'fence' something."

Again the man looked round as though seeking a way of escape, and Fred, who never despised an opportunity, however small, held out a suggestive palm and said laconically: "Shell out!"

"Only a few things," said Mr. Strauss hurriedly. "Things that were given to me or wouldn't be missed—just odds and ends like. A couple of salt spoons ——" He enumerated his loot.

"Shell out!" said Fred again. "I'm hard up and want the money. I'll take a share and you shall have the money back—one of these days."

Mr. Strauss complied with a curse.

"Come and have a drink," said Fred briskly, when the transaction had been completed to his satisfaction.

"You've left me with about thirty dollars' worth," grumbled the man. "Really, Mr. Grogan, I don't think you're fair," and he looked at the other suspiciously. "And you don't look as if you're hard up either."

"Appearances are deceptive," said the cheerful Fred, and led the way into a private bar. "What are you now—valet or butler?"

"Butler," replied Strauss, tossing down the liquor. "It's not a bad place, Mr. Grogan."

"Call me Fred," Slick Fred said cordially.

"It seems a liberty," said Strauss, and meant it. "I've got a butler's job with a very nice gentleman," he said.

"Rich?"

Mr. Strauss nodded.

"Yards of it," he said briefly. "But what's the good? He knows I'm a jailbird, and he's very decent to me."

Fred was eying him narrowly.

"You still dope, I see?" he said, and the man flushed.

"Yes," he said gruffly, "I take a little stimulant now and again."

"Well," said Fred, "who is your boss?"

"You wouldn't know him." Mr. Strauss shook his head. "He's a city gentleman, head of an insurance office."

"Doctor—Judd?" asked Slick Fred quickly.

"Why, yes," said the other in surprise. "How did you know?"

They parted soon after, and Slick Fred was a thoughtful man for the rest of the day, and his plans began to take shape toward the evening.

He dressed himself with care after dark, and strolled Strandward, for he numbered among his other accomplishments that of an experienced squire of dames. He had a ready smile for the solitary girl hurrying homeward, and, though the rebuffs were many, such conquests as he had to his credit added to the pleasures of memory. Between St. Martin's Church and the corner of the Strand he drew a blank, for such girls as he saw were unattractive or were escorted. Opposite Morley's Hotel he saw a girl alone—a rare beauty. Fred swung round, and in two strides had overtaken her.

"Haven't we met before?" he asked,

raising his hat, but asked no more. Somebody caught him by the collar and jerked him back.

"Fred, I shall really have to be severe with you," said the hated voice of Larry Holt, and Fred developed an instant grievance.

He continued his stroll to the Strand in a bitter mood, for the romance had been shaken out of him.

Diana Ward passed on, unconscious of the fact that Larry Holt had been behind her. It was not an unusual experience to be spoken to in the street, and she had grown hardened to that also.

She lived above a tobacconist's shop in the Charing Cross Road, and Larry saw her open the side door and go into the dark passage; he waited for a few minutes, then continued his walk.

This girl had made an extraordinary impression upon him. He told himself that it was not her delicate beauty, or anything about her that was feminine, but that it was her genius, her extraordinary reasoning faculties which attracted him; and, to do him justice, he believed this. He was not a susceptible man. So he told himself. It was extraordinary that it was necessary to tell himself anything; but there was the indisputable fact that he spent a great deal of his spare time in arguing out his attitude of mind toward Diana Ward. And he had known her something over twenty-four hours!

Diana Ward was not thinking of Larry as she went into her flat. Her mind was wholly occupied by the problems which the Stuart case presented. She felt that, if the missing Clarissa were found, they would be on the high road to discovering the cause of Stuart's death and the motive for this hideous crime.

She slammed the door and went up the dark and narrow stairs slowly. The upper part of the tobacconist's was let off in three flats, and she occupied the highest and the cheapest. The tenants of the other two were, she knew, spending the week-end in the country. The first floor was occupied by a bachelor civil servant, a hearty man whose parties occasionally kept her awake at night; the second floor by a newspaper artist and his wife; and she had no reason to complain of her neighbors.

She had reached the second landing, her foot was on the stairs of the final two flights, when she stopped. The faint creak of a sound which she had felt rather than heard caused her to pause. Then smiled at her nervousness. She had heard these creaks and whispers before on the dark stairs, but had overcome her timidity to discover that they were purely imaginary. Nevertheless, she walked up a little more slowly and reached the landing whence rose a short flight of stairs to her own apartments. The landing was a broad one, and as she turned, with one hand on the banisters, she put out the other in a spirit of bravado as though she groped for some hidden intruder.

And an unanny chill crept over her, for her hand had touched the coat of a man! She screamed, but instantly a hand, a big hand, covered her face, and she was drawn slowly backward. She fought and struggled, but the man who held her had almost superhuman strength, and the arm about her was like a vise. Suddenly she went limp, and momentarily the arm that held her relaxed.

"Fainted, have ye?" said a harsh voice, and as a hand came feeling down for her face, the other arm relaxed a little more.

With a sudden dart the girl broke free, ran up the remaining stairs, and opened and slammed the door. There was a key on the inside, and this she turned with a heart full of gratitude that she had never locked her bedroom door from the outside. She flew across

the room, stopping only to switch on the lights, pulled out a drawer and took from its depths a small revolver. Diana Ward came from a stock which was not easily scared; and though her heart was pounding painfully, she ran back at the door and flung it open.

She stood for the space of a few seconds. She heard a stealthy footstep on the stairs and fired. There was a cry of fear, and a blunder of feet down the stairs. Only for a moment did she hesitate, and then raced down the stairway in pursuit. She heard the thump of feet on the landing lower down, heard the rattle of the door, and came down the last flight to find it open and nobody in sight.

Concealing the revolver in a fold of her dress, she stepped out into the Charing Cross Road. At this hour there were few pedestrians, and she looked round for some sign of her assailant. A light motor truck was driving away, and the only person she saw near at hand was an old blind man. The iron ferrule of his stick came tap-tap-tap as he stumbled painfully along.

"Pity the blind!" he wailed. "Pity the poor blind!"

To be continued in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.

STATE POLICE

TWELVE States of this country have State police forces. The Massachusetts district police, which was created in 1865 and reorganized in 1879, is a very slender force indeed. It consists of about 125 men appointed by the governor to help in preserving order, to assist local State's attorneys in investigating crimes, to inspect moving-picture houses, steam boilers, et cetera; to report on fires, enforce State laws in regard to fishing, motor-boat equipment, et cetera. Connecticut has a similar force.

Sheriffs and deputy sheriffs and "special agents" are used in South Dakota as the State constabulary. Not more than three special agents may be employed at any one time by the State sheriff, but additional deputy sheriffs may be appointed in emergencies. In Idaho all the State, county, and municipal peace officers are included in the State constabulary, and, in addition, State policemen may be appointed to enforce the law. Usually from five to ten men are so employed.

The Pennsylvania State Police was the chief model for all the other States that have adopted a State constabulary. Organized on a military basis, the Pennsylvania force is composed of about 415 officers and privates. Subdivided into five troops and assigned to posts in various parts of the State, and Pennsylvania State troopers patrol the roads and keep in touch with one another by telephone or wireless. Whenever possible the State police coöperates with local authorities in the suppression of crime. Its members act also as game, fire, fish, and forest wardens and have full police powers. New York, Nevada, Michigan, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia have State police forces similar to the Pennsylvania constabulary.

The old Canadian Northwest Mounted Police, organized in 1873, was the principal model for the Pennsylvania State police force. From the rural constabulary of England, the Australian Trooper Police, established in 1825, and the British South African Police, formed in 1897, there may have come suggestions for the formation of the corresponding police organizations in this country.

Ensnared by Truth

By Charles Rideaux

THAT morning Detective Sergeant Craven received two disturbing letters. He found them lying on his plate when he came down to breakfast, and his wife, pouring out coffee, remarked that one of them looked so dirty that the maid should have known better than to put it on the plate.

Craven lifted the envelope with his finger and thumb and examined it curiously. It was creased, and filthily dirty—as though for months it had lain in somebody's pocket—and his name, "Richard Craven," without prefix or suffix, sprawled across it in large, illiterate handwriting.

Inside the envelope was a half-sheet of equally dirty note paper, upon which was written in the same handwriting:

To Detective Craven:

Ten years ago you got me put away for something I never done. I told you, then, and I warn you again now, that I'll get even. I'm free now and I'm going to. It may not be this year, but I can wait. If I can't hit you straight I'll make you suffer through somebody else.

Craven read the letter twice very carefully and then slipped it into his pocket.

"It's nothing of any importance, my dear," he said in answer to his wife's inquiry. "I'll attend to it at the office."

He sipped his coffee thoughtfully. For some reason the letter worried him. It was strange, because during his career he had received many like it and they had not upset him. But those other letters had threatened only him, while this spoke of "hurting you through somebody else." That "somebody else" must be his wife.

He reviewed it from all angles, and argued with himself that, as he had said, the letter was of no importance; but the fear was there, and he could not move it. It was disturbing. But then his nerves were in such a state he would worry about anything.

He tore open the second envelope, and discovered a letter from his doctor.

Dear Craven: I have mentioned your case to William Bath, the eminent specialist in nervous disorders, and he says that you cannot be cured unless you take a complete rest.

Of course, it is difficult for him to diagnose without a personal examination; but I think and hope that this and what I have already told you will induce you to take a long holiday from your work.

An advanced case of nervous disorder, such as yours, deserves the most careful treatment, and I cannot emphasize the point too strongly that, though you may now suffer only from worry and sleeplessness, if you do not take yourself in hand at once something worse may happen. Yours sincerely,

James Hartgreves.

"And that one, my dear," Millie said. "Is that of no importance, either?" the half-anxious, half-amused smile on her lips told Craven, as it had told him many times before, that he could not disguise his feelings from his wife.

"It's from Hartgreves," he admitted. "He says I ought to take a vacation."

"And you know very well that you ought. Why, Dick, you've no idea how bad you really are! Now, do ask the inspector to-day to let you off for a month. I'm sure he will."

Craven murmured something about "duty," and "a lot of work to do;" but nevertheless that morning at police headquarters he applied for an interview with the inspector and laid the case of his ill health before him.

"It's not that I want to take a vacation," he argued with the plaintiveness of a sick child, "but in the face of the doctor's letter and the fact that I've not been feeling at all well lately, I think I must do so to prevent a complete breakdown."

The inspector placed the tips of his fingers together and pursed his lips.

"Of course you must go, Craven," he said. "Take a month off from to-day. I'll attend to the necessary detail about this."

Before leaving headquarters Detective Craven looked up the files of ten years' men who had lately been released from prison. The first report he found related to one John Willcox, of Vickers, a yeggman, whom he had arrested on a charge of burglary ten years before.

Craven pored over it for twenty minutes, examining minutely each bald fact of the man's career, until, near the end, he came upon a statement which seemed to rule Willcox out of the running as the sender of the letter. It was, "Released August 2, 1920, and left for Japan six days later. Not yet returned."

Craven turned to the end of the second file before he started reading it, and found that the particular criminal to whom it related was dead.

The third file dealt with the career of a man named William Don, known to his associates as "Demmijon"—a corruption of "Jemmy" Don. He was a "burglary and assault" case and had been sentenced for half killing an old butler in a Fifth Avenue home. Craven remembered him well; a short, dark fellow, with greasy hair and an abutting chin. Incidents of the man's trial recorded in the file brought the whole case back to him.

He remembered the scene, just after the judge had passed sentence, and the jailers, one on each side of the prisoner, had turned him toward the steps that led to the cells below. Demmijon then suddenly broke free, and rushing to the front of the dock, pointed a trembling finger at the man who had captured him.

"You think yourself mighty clever, Mister Craven," he said sneeringly. "But you wait till I git out—I won't fergit yer! I'll——"

Then the jailers recaptured him and he was hurried below, shouting as he went, and shaking his fists in the air.

That was ten years ago. But the scene was as plain to Craven to-day as it was then.

He came to the end of the file and found that Don had been released on November 8th—just a week before. He was living, it said, in Houston Street, and was under observation.

Craven returned the files, and then took the elevator to the top of the building, where he found Detective Sergeant Gregson, the officer who would take his place while he was away. He showed him the letter and told him the facts about Demmijon.

"All right," replied Gregson. "I'll have him specially watched. But I don't think you've much to fear. These fellows talk a lot about getting their own back, but they very rarely risk imprisonment a second time just to satisfy personal enmity."

"I know; but it's that last sentence that worries me—'I'll make you suffer through somebody else.' He can only mean my wife, and a clever man could murder Millie when I'm not there and

get away with it. The little girl's so much alone, you know."

"Don't you go thinking things like that. I'll keep Mr. Demmijon so well covered that he won't be able to get within miles of your wife. And now you get away to the country somewhere, and forget all about it."

A few minutes later Craven left headquarters; but he was still worried.

II.

Craven locked up his town house, and took a cottage on Long Island Sound. The weather was cold and healthy, and in a few days he began to feel the benefit of the change physically. But his nerves were still in pieces. Every sudden shadow thrown by the pale winter sun startled him, and he paused in his stride a hundred times a day to whip round in search of a peril which was never there. He looked upon every stranger with suspicion, and could not bear a maid about the place; therefore his wife did all the work of the little cottage, and they lived alone.

At night, too, he suffered torment. Fearful dreams, in which Demmijon was always prominent as a terrible omnipotent ogre, haunted him and made him groan and toss on the bed. He began to talk in his sleep, and one night his wife overheard enough to make further concealment of the letter useless. So he told her all about it.

She heard him through in silence.

"But why are you worrying?" she asked quietly when he had finished. "Surely you can trust Mr. Gregson and your own men? I don't think there's any chance of this Don person getting down here without our knowing."

"So you're not afraid?" he said blankly.

"Of course I'm not, dear. Why should I be?"

Her coolness was like balm to his fretted nerves, and from that day the shadow of Demmijon gradually became fainter, until at last Craven thought it had gone forever.

He found that golf was good medicine for his nerves, and with his wife he spent most afternoons on the links. At the end of one such strenuous day they returned, dead-tired, to the cottage, and after a meal, Craven went off to bed, leaving his wife to wash the dishes and follow.

He must have fallen asleep almost immediately, for he had no memory of its growing dark. At first his rest was perfect, and then insidiously, the shadow of Demmijon, so long absent, obtruded itself, and Craven was given over to torment.

That night Demmijon was more terrible than he had ever been; he seemed to have grown to an immense size, and his greasy hair stuck out round his head like sword points. In his hand he carried a gleaming knife, which he sharpened on the sole of his boot, afterward trying the edge with his thumb, and smiling diabolically when it cut him.

Craven, from his sleep, watched him in agony, until the fiend opened the bedroom door and started creeping down the stairs. Then, with a scream, the sleeper awoke. Cold beads of perspiration were running down his face, and the bed vibrated with his trembling.

It was very dark in the room, and he struck a match to see the time. His watch showed five minutes to one. As the match flared up he turned his head to look at his wife. She was not there.

He was numbed with apprehension. The match hissed and flickered out. It burned his fingers, and the pain restored to him the power to move. With trembling hand he struck another match and lighted the candle by his side. Then he put on his dressing gown and went downstairs.

The door of the sitting room was open, and a light was burning inside. He crept to the door and looked in. Half lying across the table, with her head on her arms, was his wife, and the back of her blouse showed red, where some one had stabbed her.

"Millie, Millie!" He rushed into the room and lifted her shoulders. "Oh, speak to me!"

He put his ear to her heart and listened. There was the very faintest of beats: hope still remained. Immediately he changed from the distracted husband to the cool, quick man of action, and lifting her in his strong arms, he bore her to the sofa and laid her upon it.

He bound her wound and managed to stanch the flow of blood. Then he sprinkled water on her face, held smelling salts beneath her nose, and did everything he knew how; but the faint heartbeat grew no stronger.

There was a telephone in the cottage in another room, but he hated leaving Millie even for a minute. Finally, when he felt that he could do no more, he went to the telephone.

After what seemed hours, a sleepy voice at the other end of the wire asked for the number.

"A doctor—quickly!" he jerked into the transmitter. "It's a matter of life and death. Hurry!"

"I'll do my best," said the operator.

There were clickings and buzzings and long periods of silence; then a brisk voice said:

"Hello! What's the matter?"

"Beachside Cottage, on Winding Road. Stabbing! Hurry or you'll be too late!"

"All right!" the brisk voice replied. "I'll be round in five minutes."

Craven hurried back to the sitting room. His wife had moved slightly and was breathing in quick gasps. He sat by her side and took her hand in his, murmuring broken, half-hysterical endearments the while. The man of action had once again given place to the husband.

Presently the drone of a motor sounded in the silence outside, and increased in volume until it stopped at the door. Craven sprang to his feet and admitted the doctor, a tall, brisk young man who wasted little time on words, but brushed past him into the lighted room and knelt by the sofa.

"She'll live," he said, at the end of a brief examination. "It isn't very serious. Who did it?"

"Thank Heaven!" Craven murmured with a long sigh of relief.

The doctor's hands were busy with scissors and lint. "Put on the lights upstairs, and then help me carry her to bed," he ordered, without looking up.

When Millie was in bed, and everything that could be done for her had been accomplished, the doctor repeated his question!

"Who did it?"

"I'm not sure," said Craven. "I found her lying on the table at five minutes to three. I think the brute who did it is a man named Don—a criminal who bears me a grudge. I'm a detective, you know."

"So I've been told. Well, we can't do anything more for a minute or two until she regains consciousness. But she'll be all right. Supposing you go downstairs again. The fellow may still be in the house."

Craven reluctantly left the bedside and returned to the sitting room. Once there he became again the man of action—the bloodhound on the trail. But this time he had the keen spur of hate to urge him on, hatred of the man who had tried to take from him his dearest possession.

He opened the drawer of the sitting-room table and took from it a revolver. Then he made a thorough search of the house, examining every possible

place where a man might hide. But there was nothing. No curtain had been disturbed, no door had been forced, no window opened.

Puzzled, he went back to the sitting room and lighted all of the lights. Then, on hands and knees, he searched the floor for alien footprints. There were none, but underneath the table, half hidden in the fringe of a rug, he found a thin Oriental paper knife, made of brass-inlaid steel. And the point of it was stained.

As he stood there, with the queerly carven knife in his hands, the whole grim scene as it must have been acted in that room less than three hours before, seemed to take form before his eyes—like the ghost figures on a motion-picture screen when the music stops.

He saw his wife again sitting at the table, writing a letter—the pen and ink-splashed paper were still there—and the terrible Demmijon of his dreams creeping up behind her, the knife raised high in his huge right hand. Then Demmijon paused behind Millie's chair, and lifted the knife still higher to plunge it between her shoulders——

"Good Lord!" cried the doctor. "What are you doing?"

The ghost drama had seemed so real that Craven had not heard him enter.

"I don't know," Craven said in a voice that sounded queer even to him. "What was I doing? Only standing and thinking, wasn't I?"

"You were doing your best to stab a hole in that table," the doctor answered. "Here, give me that knife."

Craven looked down and found that he was holding the knife by the hilt in his right hand.

"Was I doing that?" he asked with a strange, half-hysterical laugh. "But it seemed so real to me. You know, doctor, my nerves have been in an awful state for months, and this business has about broken the last strand."

"I think so, too," said the doctor. He was looking at him closely. "If you're not careful you'll be in for a serious breakdown. But come up to your wife. She's asking for you."

"Is she all right?" Craven asked eagerly.

"Oh, yes; she'll be up in a week."

"That takes a load off my mind," muttered Craven thankfully.

"Millie! Oh, my dear, I thought that I had lost you."

She smiled weakly, and said "darling" in a very low voice as he bent to kiss her white face.

Craven had always loved his wife, and been conscious that he did, but never until that morning, when he sat by her side with her hand in his, and watched the gray chariot of dawn steal across the sky, did he realize how much.

There was a choke in his throat all the time that he was speaking to her —soothing her with the words of love with which he had wooed her seven years before. It was strange to see Craven, usually so brusque, softening his every tone and action to this little woman that was his. The bachelor doctor looked on and wondered.

Half an hour later Craven left his wife in the care of the doctor and caught an express train to town. He reflected as the train tore along through the half light of the dull winter morning, reviewing the strange case as dispassionately as he would have any other case.

Of two facts he was sure. One was that Demmijon had committed the crime; the other, that he had entered the house some time during the afternoon, when both the occupants were out golfing, and remained hidden until night.

As yet, he had no evidence beyond the threatening letter to support the first theory; and the second was based upon the fact that neither windows nor doors

showed any sign of having been opened from the outside. But Craven's method of working was to compound a likely theory and then look for evidence to support it.

The doctor had forbidden him to cross-examine Millie too thoroughly, but he had asked her one or two questions, the net result of which was nothing. She had no memory of any happening after she sat at the table to write the letter. She had not seen nor heard her assailant, and all she could say definitely was that the attack had been between eight-thirty and ten o'clock.

At headquarters Craven was told that the inspector had not yet arrived; so he took the elevator to the top floor and went to Gregson's office.

"Good heavens, Craven! I thought you were down at the beach."

"I was," Craven answered. He took a seat near Gregson's desk and helped himself to a cigar from the open box. "Somebody tried to murder my wife last night," he said quietly.

Gregson sat bolt upright in his chair. "What? Who did it?"

"That's what I've come to ask you."

Craven was amazed at his own coolness. The shock seemed to have completely numbed his nervous system. His hands and voice were perfectly steady, and his brain as clear as it had ever been.

Gregson drummed his fingers on the desk. He was obviously very much upset at his colleague's news.

"Have you anything to work upon?" he asked.

"Nothing—except that letter from Demmijon I showed you before I went away." Then in sharp, clear sentences he told what had happened at Beachside Cottage.

"And Mrs. Craven doesn't remember anything?"

"Not so far. Of course the doctor wouldn't let me talk to her too much at the time. When I see her again she may be able to tell me something."

"Demmijon has been watched," said Gregson, "ever since you went away, but I have not heard anything about his movements. We'll see the report now."

He pressed an electric bell on the desk, and a policeman entered.

"William Don, who was released November 8th, is being watched. Will you get the report?"

In a short time the policeman returned with one of the neat files of headquarters and the news that the plain-clothes man who had been watching Demmijon had been killed in a street accident over a week before. When a new man was appointed Demmijon had disappeared.

"Since then, sir, he's not been seen. He just walked out of his house and vanished."

The two detectives exchanged glances.

Gregson's was amazed and annoyed, but the news was not a surprise to Craven. He had expected to hear something of the sort.

"Tell Sergeant Fuller to come," Gregson ordered, "at once."

When Sergeant Fuller entered it was evident that the policeman had warned him of his chief's annoyance, for he burst into excuses as soon as he entered the room.

"I didn't mention the matter to you, sir, because I didn't consider that it was of great importance. But as soon as he disappeared I took every step to have him found—up to the present with no result."

"And in the meantime," said Gregson hotly, "he's attempted to murder Mr. Craven's wife."

"I'm very sorry to hear that, sir. I hope the lady is not seriously injured."

"Not seriously, thank you, Fuller," Craven replied. He turned to Gregson. "I don't think we should let Sergeant Fuller go away under the impression that we blame him for this unfor-

tunate affair. Of course, Demmijon should have been watched more carefully, but if the sergeant didn't know the full circumstances of the case I don't think we can hold him responsible."

It was such little considerations for a fellow man's feelings that had made Craven so well loved at headquarters.

Later in the morning Craven took the elevated to Houston Street, and entered a greasy lunch room that stood on the corner. It was a slack time of the day for trade, and there was only one customer to be seen—a tall, cadaverous man, stitting at a table by the fire sipping coffee and reading a newspaper.

Craven got a cup of coffee and a slice of cake at the counter and took a seat opposite this man. He munched his cake until the proprietor of the eating house was at the far end of the counter. Then he leaned forward and whispered: "Detective Moseley."

The paper rustled violently down and the stranger leaned forward expectantly.

"I'm Detective Sergeant Craven; I don't think we have met before. You are here watching for Demmijon?"

"Yes, sir," Moseley answered. "But no luck so far. I can't think where he can be hiding. He is certainly in none of the usual dug-outs of the neighborhood."

"He must be somewhere," said Craven, "and he's got to be found."

He told the detective of the latest exploit in the career of Demmijon, and showed him the threatening letter.

"There's simply not a thing to go upon," Moseley said. He got up from his seat and pointed through the window down the street. "He left that house one day last week and vanished into thin air. Nobody's seen him since. In fact, I've heard some of his pals round here inquiring for him."

"It seems strange," Craven murmured. "He wasn't such a clever fellow. Who's in his house?"

"It wasn't his house. It's kept by a widow. He's lived there before."

"I'd like to see the room," said Craven. "Can we get in without being noticed?"

"Oh, easily."

They paid the check and left. Mrs. Jarvis, the widow-woman who kept the miserable hovel where Demmijon had lodged, threw the door wide open at sight of Moseley, and they tramped up the rickety flight of stairs to the first floor.

"It's here," said Moseley, crossing the landing to a room opposite. They entered and closed the door after them.

"He slept here," Moseley added, "and took his meals downstairs with the other lodgers."

It was a small, uncomfortable-looking room, containing little furniture beyond a bed and a chest of drawers. The floor was uncovered and very dirty. In one corner a leather trunk, bearing the names of half the ports in the world, attracted Craven's interest.

"Have you got the key of this?" he asked.

Moseley fumbled in his pocket and produced it. "I had one made," he said.

But the trunk was disappointing. There was nothing in it but clothing and a few odds and ends of cheap jewelry. Craven got to his feet—he had been kneeling by the trunk—and brushed the dust from his trousers.

"Anything else?" he asked.

"Nothing."

"I shall find him," Craven answered. "A man can't dissolve into the air."

On the top of the L going back a sudden, horrible thought struck him. Suppose Demmijon returned to finish his work? The whole story was in the papers by now, and he would know that he had failed. Craven got off the

L and went to the nearest telephone-call booth and rang up Gregson.

"I want you to send two plain-clothes men down to watch the house in case of accidents," he said. "Demmijon may still be in the neighborhood."

"All right," Gregson agreed. "By the way, I've sent Waycott and a man down to Beachside Cottage on the case."

"They won't find anything," said Craven. "It's here, in New York, that we must concentrate."

But where to begin? Craven asked himself that question a thousand times on his way back to Long Island. And it remained unanswered. Supposing Demmijon were dead? He was a man of crude, violent temper—a neurotic almost. It was more than possible that he had committed suicide after the crime.

But if so, where and how? It was unlikely that a man of his temperament would drown himself. He would choose a swifter method—a bullet or the like. But no case of suicide had been reported. Of course, only a short time had passed since the crime, but it is difficult to come to a violent death in New York without somebody knowing about it very soon afterward.

He found Millie very much better, and quite cheerful. The doctor told him that the wound was slight and the shock had little effect on her young nerves. Craven wished that the same was true of himself. Now that the strain of the day was over, now that all he could do was done, he felt for the first time the effect of the past hours.

His head was throbbing like a mill, and he had an insane desire to scream, or laugh, or to do something that would wreck the pounding engine in his brain and give him surcease. Yet he dreaded the very thought of going to bed. He was afraid to sleep because he was afraid to dream.

He and the doctor had supper together in the dining room. During Craven's absence the doctor had taken matters into his own hands, and a woman from the village had been installed to take care of the house until Millie was better. A nurse was to arrive on the following day.

"A peculiar point has struck me about this case," the doctor said suddenly, halfway through the meal. "Why did the assailant use that paper knife? Surely he would have come prepared."

"I've thought of that," Craven answered, toying with his bread—he had eaten hardly a thing. "I should imagine that Demmijon brought a revolver with him, but finding the paper knife decided that it was safer to use a silent weapon.

"You seem very certain that it was Demmijon?" the doctor queried curiously. Craven had told him all about the threatening letter.

"Who else could it be? But don't let us talk about it any more to-night; my head's bursting."

The doctor leaned across the corner of the table and gripped Craven by the arm.

"You should drop this case and give it to somebody else," he said. "You're on the edge of a bad nervous breakdown, and you'll keel over if you don't take care."

"I know, I know," Craven answered testily. "But I must go on. Doctor, you've no idea what I've been through to-day."

"Yes I have; and because I know—perhaps a lot more than you think—I advise you to hand the case over to a colleague."

Craven shook his head.

"I can't leave it now," he said, "I must go on."

By virtue of a certain opiate which the doctor gave him before he went to bed, Craven slept like a log and awoke the next morning feeling fresher than he

had done for weeks. It was crisp, cold weather, and a good breakfast, followed by an assurance from the doctor that Millie would be up the next day, restored something of his old keenness and vigor.

But disappointment awaited him at headquarters. There was nothing to report. A description of Demmijon had been flashed over the wires to every precinct station in the city, and plain-clothes men were watching for him at every steamship pier and railroad terminal—but without result. Apparently he had not attempted to leave the city.

In pursuance of his theory that he had committed suicide, Craven paid a visit to the morgue. But he whom Craven sought was not there.

He emerged into the winter sunlight, baffled. He had built high hopes upon his theory, and now he was at a dead end again. Every road he took seemed to be a blind alley. Demmijon, alive or dead, had vanished.

A taxi hummed slowly along the street, as though out of place in the squalid neighborhood. Craven hailed it. A taxi was a comfortable place in which to think. He ordered the man to drive slowly through the city; then he lay back against the cushions and shut his eyes.

He turned over in his mind all the possibilities that might account for Demmijon's disappearance. If he had committed suicide on the scene of the crime in the violent manner Craven was sure he would choose, his body would have been found and put in the morgue. But Waycott, the man Gregson had sent on the case, had been there and found nothing. It was possible that he had killed himself somewhere inland, but nothing had been reported. New York seemed the likeliest place in which he would do it. Here was his home, and the nervous reaction following the excitement of the crime would prompt him to return to it, the detective was sure.

Craven awoke from his meditations to find the taxi held up in a traffic block at Forty-second Street and Broadway. Although he was bound for nowhere in particular he chafed at the delay. He wanted to go somewhere, to do something. When the traffic moved forward he ordered the driver to drive him back to headquarters.

Excitement awaited him there. Gregson was pacing up and down his office, and Sergeant Fuller and Moseley, the detective, were both talking at once. When Craven entered they stopped suddenly.

"We've found Demmijon!" Gregson announced.

Craven drew in his breath sharply. "Alive?"

"No. He's in the morgue in Brooklyn—fell under a subway train and wasn't identified until to-day."

Craven glanced from one to the other of them. "There's something else you've got to tell me?" he said.

"Yes." Gregson spoke slowly. "He was killed two days before your wife was attacked."

"What?" It was all Craven could say. His brain turned suddenly chaotic. He had been certain that Demmijon was the criminal; and now his theory had gone up in smoke. He would have to begin again—where?

He felt weak and terrified. What was this thing that had descended upon him, struck at the heart of his home, disappeared, and then turned and jeered at his puny efforts to contend with it? He collapsed into a chair and burst into wild laughter. What a fool he was—what fools they all were—to think that they could combat a thing that was omnipotent—and unknown.

As he sat there the office seemed to melt away in a mist, and when this mist developed into shape he saw that it was the Demmijon of his dreams,

the hideous monster that had haunted him at nights and made sleep intolerable. And he was laughing, laughing, laughing.

When the laughing fiend eventually left him, after what seemed an endless period of time, Craven awoke to find himself lying between cool sheets in a room which he did not know. He felt very weak, but his mind was easy and happy—easier and happier than it had been for weeks.

Presently the young doctor came in.

"Hullo!" he said. "How do you feel?"

Craven wasn't really sure how he felt, so he just smiled and the doctor came to the bedside and felt his pulse.

He did not know for days that he had been in bed for two weeks following his nervous collapse at headquarters. Millie told him, one day when she came to the hospital with flowers and fruit. She was quite well and strong again now, and the knowledge of this helped more than anything to mend him.

"I must get up and after that coward who attacked you," he kept saying, despite Millie's protests that she was well now, and that no good would be served by continuing the wild-goose chase.

One day when he was convalescent he mentioned the matter to the young doctor while they were walking up and down the lawn outside.

"I'm glad you've opened the subject," the doctor said. "There is something I have been wanting to tell you." He paused suddenly, and gripping Craven by both shoulders, looked fixedly into his eyes. "If I told you," he said, "that the danger which once threatened your wife has been removed forever, and that it would give you great pain if the source of it were disclosed —would you still seek the truth?"

Craven stared at him in amazement. "I don't understand," he said. "Why, of course I should."

The young doctor sighed. "Then I must tell you. *You* stabbed your wife!"

Craven's whole world seemed to rock. "I did?"

"Yes. In your sleep. Do you remember the night I found you trying to stab that table? Well, on the following night I passed by the sitting-room window on my way home—you know the window faces the street? The blinds were not drawn and I saw you inside doing the same again."

"But that does not prove anything," Craven said hoarsely. His face was white.

"No. But since then I have seen your doctor, and Mrs. Craven has told me that just before this thing happened you had taken to walking in your sleep. She's a dear, illogical soul, and I thought it best not to tell you in case you got frightened."

There was a long silence, then Craven seemed to pull himself together. "Does Millie know all this?" he asked.

"No," the doctor answered.

"And tell me—is there any danger of this happening again?"

"Little or none," said the doctor, "as long as you take care of yourself."

"Come and have some coffee!" called a bright voice from the door, and turning they saw Millie standing there, looking radiant and happy.

"All right!" said the doctor. "We're coming now." As they walked toward her he gripped Craven's arm. "It's safe with me," he said.

Craven nodded gratefully. They were at the door now, and he took his wife in his arms and kissed her. There was a wealth of meaning in that kiss.

They entered the house together in silence.

And the case of Richard Craven was closed.

Connecting Links

by Scott Campbell

Author of "Ostracized," etc.

CHAPTER I.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS.

DRAWING the tape from a ticker in his private office Dillon read market quotations. He was a stock and bond broker, Mr. Andrew Jackson Dillon, with an elegant office in the Page Building and a beautiful home in the residential section of Nordeck, where he lived with two elderly maiden sisters, though he still was under forty.

It had been a fateful October day in Wall Street. But the surging uproar, the maelstrom of opposing forces, the frantic fight for fortune, the bitter battle for gold in that theater of sensational episodes and tragic events, the New York Stock Exchange—all had ceased, as if suddenly calmed by a magic hand. The sonorous gong had declared that the day was done.

Dillon read the closing quotations. His hands were steady. His nerves were like fibers of steel. No sign of soul-sickening disaster and impending ruin appeared in his smooth-shaven, strong-lined face. If such a calamity threatened him, it was met with the cold composure of a man of the world who is confident that any disaster whatsoever can be repaired. He sat down at his desk and eyed with steadfast gaze his onyx inkstand. He was trying to decide, not what might be done, not whether it should be done, but only—how it could be done. How it could be done—and done safely!

Dillon employed only one stenographer who did most of his clerical work. But for some reason he kept most of his books. He did not hear her knock on the door. She ventured to open it, a tall, graceful girl of twenty-two with fluffy auburn hair and remarkably keen gray eyes.

"Mr. Hargrave is here," she said smoothly. "Will you see him?"

"Hargrave!" Dillon started and turned quickly. "See him—certainly! I am always at liberty when Hargrave calls. He's an old friend. One moment—I will dictate no letters to-day," he told her. "You may go now, Mabel, if you like."

"Thank you," she said. "I am glad to leave early."

"Very good." Dillon waved her out and greeted the florid, fashionably clad man who was entering. "Very glad to see you, Hargrave," he said cordially. "Sit down. What brought you in from Nordeck? I know, Richard, that you detest the city."

"An appointment with my lawyer," said Hargrave. He was a stout, fleshy man also near forty, whose puffed red cheeks and baggy eyes showed that he had not yet suffered seriously under the prohibitory amendment. He was by far the richest resident of Nordeck, though he had the unenviable distinction of having been politely intoxicated most of the time since inheriting his father's millions eight years before. "He wanted to confer with an attorney here and wished me to meet him," he added. "I complied, Andy, of course, but under protest."

"The same old suit, I suppose." Dillon eyed him quizzically. "It's been in

the courts for years. It strikes me that land boundaries and rights in real estate should be more easily settled."

"The property has greatly increased in value since the dispute over the titles came up," said Hargrave. "There now is a million involved. It cannot be settled out of court. I have tried that."

"Why the deuce don't you marry Mrs. Harvey Mortimer then and end the infernal litigation?"

"Marry her!" Hargrave laughed raucously.

"Why not? She's a very beautiful and accomplished widow, a leader in local society, and also very wealthy. What more can a man want?"

"I'd have a fine chance with her, Dillon, even if so inclined," said Hargrave with a shrug and grimace. "Mrs. Mortimer hates me. Besides, she has no right in the property. She has been fighting the suit for years only to protect the claims of her niece and ward, Oro Gordon, who is not yet of age. She has a vast fortune, much greater than that of her aunt."

"Marry the niece, then," Dillon dryly advised. "That surely would settle it. Marry Ora Gordon."

"Humph!" Hargrave's heavy lids drooped over his dull eyes and half hid their sharper gleam and glitter. "Now you have said something. I would think better of that, Andy, very much better," he admitted. "But I wouldn't have a look in. Ora Gordon detests me, too. She speaks to me only under protest and the compulsion of circumstances. I'd like to know just how deep her hatred really is and to what it might drive her. But why don't you act on your own advice?' he asked abruptly. "Why don't you marry her?"

"Don't you think I have troubles enough?" Dillon laughed ironically. "Marry that madcap? Not on your life, Hargrave, with all her beauty and all her millions. I don't like athletic girls or mannish women. Besides, Dick, I have no such incentive as you."

"I'm not so sure," Hargrave drew up a little. "You would not in that case, Dillon, have had to borrow from me. Two hundred thousand dollars is a good bit of money. You are aware, of course, that your note is due tomorrow."

"Did you call to tell me that?"

"Only to remind you."

"I am not one who forgets a financial obligation." Dillon's keen, incisive voice hardened slightly. "Were you worried about it?"

"Not at all," said Hargrave. "The loan is secured by the ample collateral you gave me. I examined the securities this morning. They more than cover the loan even in this bad market."

"Bad market is right," Dillon agreed. "Frenzied finance cut a wide swath today. Avarice did her worst. Greed was out to glut itself. Weak men were mowed down like blades of grass by the merciless scythe of frantic speculation. A bad market, Hargrave, indeed. It split wide open at the closing."

"But you, Dillon, are not a weak man." Hargrave eyed him searchingly.

"Far from it." Dillon's thin lips tightened. "Very far from it, Hargrave. I never was in trouble I could not successfully overcome."

"I hope you are in right in the market."

"I am always in right. I never go in unless sure I am right. Still, under the present depressed conditions and the uncertain outlook," Dillon deliberately added, "I would be glad to have you renew the note."

"It's not convenient;" Hargrave quickly objected. "I need the money."

"We have been good friends, Dick, for many years," Dillon reminded him.

"Very true. There is a point, however, beyond which friendship cannot be properly strained. It's not business," Hargrave forcibly argued. "Two

hundred thousand dollars is a lot of money. It's more than I want tied up in a loan just now. I happen to need it badly."

"But suppose——"

"See here, Dillon!" Hargrave lurched forward a bit impatiently. "I twice have extended this note for you. I have, in fact, done all you requested in regard to the loan. I have not mentioned it to others. No record of it has been made. Neither your note nor the securities you gave me have been out of my library safe. I have kept the matter a secret as you desired. You feared publicity might hurt your business. I now need the money, Dillon, and I must have it," he said emphatically. "That's final. Unless you can pay the note to-morrow, I shall turn the securities into cash and——"

"Wait!" Dillon smiled oddly. He had listened without change of countenance; but his strong, clean-cut face was as inscrutable as if carved in ivory. "Have you brought the note and securities?" he inquired.

"I have not," Hargrave told him. "They are in my safe at home. I assumed, of course, that you would come prepared to take up the note and——"

"One moment." Dillon laughed softly and took a scrap of paper from a small drawer in his desk. "Here is a certified check on the Tenth National Bank, Hargrave, for the amount of the loan and the accrued interest." He tendered it for inspection. "I did prepare myself, you see. I was stringing you along, Dick, only to learn whether you had any doubt about it," he explained, with a laugh as if much amused by it.

"Oh, I had no doubt, Dillon," Hargrave hastily exclaimed, flushing deeply when he returned the check. "You should have known that I've always found you a man of your word. No, no, Andy, I had no doubt about it."

"No serious doubt, Hargrave, surely," Dillon said more warmly and with a friendly gesture, while he placed the certified check in his pocketbook. "Forgive me for having trifled with you. I did not mean to offend you."

"Offend me—nonsense!" Hargrave quickly protested, extending his hand. "You're all right, Andy, and I always knew you were. I'm sorry I can't accommodate you longer."

"It's not necessary," Dillon blandly assured him. "I appreciate your good will, Dick, all the same. I would hand you the check now, if you had brought the note and securities. Saunter over to the club with them after dinner this evening. I'll met you there. We'll settle the whole business over a quart of Extra Dry. There are still a few cases in the clubhouse cellar."

"Say! That sounds good to me. I doubt if I defer it till evening. I'm as dry as a smoked fish." Hargrave laughed and arose to go. "But I'll meet you, Dillon, all right, and don't forget the papers."

"I'll remember them, all right." Dillon smiled and shook hands with him again.

Hargrave did not defer it. He drank a quart of wine at his solitary dinner. He had no family, nor was he in business, and he kept only two elderly servants and a chauffeur.

The setting sun of that fateful evening was like a huge ball tinged with sanguinary red. The elongated shadows vanished from the valleys and upland. The golden afterglow in the misty west waned and faded to a dull red streak on the horizon. Yet daylight lingered as if loath to leave the world to night and deeds of darkness.

Hargrave paused at a low wall, his stocky figure hidden by intervening trees and a fringe of shrubbery, while he strained his heavy-lidded eyes to identify the solitary person on the golf links. It was an extensive and sporty course, stretching away to the east and

north, diversified with frequent hills and numerous hazards.

Near a mile away to the east and partly hidden by the intervening upland could be dimly seen the roofs and spires of Nordeck, the observatory dome of the Garside College for young men, and farther north the more scattered homes in the most attractive residential section. All were only dimly discernible, however, from the narrow country road flanking the west extremity of the golf links, and winding over a ridge of hills and through a broad belt of woods to the north outskirt of the town and the old colonial home and spacious estate of the man then lingering in the solitude and stillness of the lonely woodland road.

Hargrave gazed for several moments at the approaching figure. It had come over the brow of a hill, carrying a caddy bag and a golf club, and evidently seeking a ball struck from the hollow beyond and toward a putting green some thirty yards from the road where a bright red marking disk designated the tenth hole.

"I've not gone blind, nor am I seeing things," he muttered paradoxically. "That's Ora Gordon, as sure as I'm a foot high, but what new freak now has hit her? Why is she masquerading in male attire? Whose golf suit has she borrowed? Humph!" he ejaculated. "There's one way to find out. I'll go and ask her."

She had stopped on the putting green, a strong, handsome girl of nineteen, whose unusual costume, with her wavy brown hair confined under a plaid golf cap, gave her a boyish appearance which at first had deceived Hargrave. She drew back and dropped her caddy bag when she saw him approaching a bit unsteadily.

"Good evening," he greeted her, pausing a few feet away. "Don't go. I want to talk with you. I've been looking for such an opportunity."

"I don't wish to talk with you, Mr. Hargrave," she told him coldly. "I wonder at your presuming to think I would. Please go away at once."

"Presently." Hargrave's husky voice turned sinister. "It won't hurt you, Miss Gordon, to talk a while with me. I hardly knew you in that golf suit. It's a bit mannish, isn't it?"

Ora Gordon flushed deeply, then turned quite pale. She resented his tone, his rude scrutiny, and the mingling of a smile and covert leer in the corners of his mouth. She glanced toward the deserted road, the silent woods and across the broad links, but she could see no one. Though not much afraid of him, she knew how bitterly Hargrave hated her and her aunt, and that he had a quick and violent temper when provoked, and discretion impelled her to an assuasive course.

"Somewhat," she admitted, nervously fingering the niblick she had been using. "I got it because I didn't want to be bothered by college boys who always hasten to join me if they see I'm alone." She glanced toward the observatory dome in the far distance. "This is the first time I've worn it. They mean well, of course, but I don't always like to be pestered by them," she added with a forced smile.

"It's because of your pretty face, I suppose, and your sweet disposition," Hargrave said with caustic irony. He was in an ugly mood since dinner. "What will your aunt do if she loses the pending suit?" he asked bluntly. "Will she take it to the supreme court?"

"Probably," said Ora. Her cheeks went white again under his cynical insolence. "I don't think, however, there is any danger of her losing it."

"You don't, eh?" Hargrave eyed her steadily. He recalled what Dillon had advised three hours before. "She has no personal interest in the property," he muttered. "She's acting only as your guardian, and you're old enough now to

have a mind of your own. There's a lot of money involved. The lawyers will only rob us. We'd much better compromise."

"What do you mean?"

"Let's make our interests a mutual one."

"I don't understand you," said Ora, frowning.

"Unite them," Hargrave said bluntly, drawing nearer to her. "If we were to marry and——"

"Mr. Hargrave——"

"Oh, you could do worse, very much worse!" he cried, instantly resenting her look of indignation and irrepressible abhorence. "I've been thinking of it. There's no better way to end this litigation. If we marry——"

"Stop!" Miss Gordon shrank with increasing alarm from the more threatening glare in his inflamed eyes. Her hand closed with an unconscious grip on her golf club. "Don't speak to me like that," she protested. "Are you mad, or intoxicated? I will hear no more——"

"You'll hear all I have to say," Hargrave cut in harshly. "If we were to marry——"

"Let me pass," cried Ora. "I am going home."

"You're not going till I've had my say. If you attempt to——"

"Stop! Don't lay your hand on me."

"Won't I?" Hargrave sprang nearer to her and seized her arm. "You're not going. You wait right here," he fiercely insisted. "You listen to me. Unless you accept my offer——"

"I will not listen, much less accept," cried Ora. She wrenched her arm away and drew back a step. "You're a coward—a cur!" she cried, white with fright and passionate indignation. "You insult me. Don't you dare again to lay your hand on me. Don't——"

"I dare anything when——"

She saw again his outstretched hands, the deeper red in his cheeks, the threatening blaze in his angry eyes—and the golf club in her hand rose and fell under the impulse of utter desperation and self-defense. The iron head of the niblick crashed against Hargrave's forehead. He staggered, mad with fury, venting an oath as he sprang at her again—and again she struck him.

Then the awful horrer of it seized her. She dropped the club and fled as if for dear life across the links. Not once did she look back. Without pausing, seeking a devious way through secluded streets, she reached the garage driveway of her home, stole into the spacious mansion through a rear door, and crept up unseen to her own room. The horror of it still unnerved her. She did not want to talk of it. She felt that she could never speak of it. She threw herself upon her bed, sobbing hysterically, and hid her face in the pillows, just as the waning daylight was turning to dusk.

And the dusk deepened to darkness, the stars came out one by one in the purple sky, and the night dew gathered on leaves and drooping flowers and fell on the dark green verdure of the hills and golf links—and upon the still cold form and upturned face of the man lying dead near the tenth hole.

CHAPTER II.

THE VOICE THAT FAILED.

OH, I'm not conceited. My head isn't too big for my Stetson because I'm the town constable. Take it from me, Detective Wayne, I know when a well is too deep and dark for me to see the bottom." Amos Bagley emphasized it with several jerky wags of his hard, bullet-shaped head and a flash of his coal-black eyes. He was a compact, muscular little man, as energetic as a dynamo, but not generously endowed with qualities essential to a capable detective. "That's why I had Murray phone to

you as soon as I came here and sized up the crime. I heard last night you were in town. I knew the case required a longer head than mine."

It was nine o'clock when Rodney Wayne arrived upon the scene, a detective of the State police and decidedly the most impressive man among those then gathered near the lifeless form found on the golf links only an hour before. But the news of Hargrave's violent death had spread rapidly. There were several motor cars in the narrow back road, a throng of people near the edge of the golf course, and a group of men and boys here and there on the links, which then were bathed in the bright sunlight of the early morning.

Detective Wayne stood gazing at the body while listening to the constable. He was an erect, well-built man of thirty, whose smooth, clean-cut face evinced a serious and reflective temperament partly due to his vocation. He had grown up in Nordeck, where he still lived with his mother and sister, though his duties kept him away from home much of the time; and if there was any single reason why he still was a bachelor, it was because the only girl he wanted to marry seemed as far from him as zenith is from nadir.

"Who discovered the body?" he inquired with a glance at the constable.

"Joe Murray, the caretaker of the links and clubhouse. He found that a bag of clubs was missing from the house, and thinking a member of the club had it yesterday and left it on the links, he came out to find it. He found it, also the body, just as you see them," Bagley told him with characteristic loquacity. "I've let no one touch them, or come near enough to obliterate any evidence. See that crowd in the road and the men and boys on the links? I've got men keeping every mother's son of them away. The evidence lies just as Murray found it when he——"

"Evidence never lies, Bagley," Wayne dryly observed, cutting in upon his garrulous statement of the circumstances. "Evidence is absolute, Amos, and we twice blind ourselves in thinking it lies when we misinterpret it."

"Maybe so," Bagley allowed, a bit staggered by the subtlety. "Anyway, Rodney, I knew you'd want to see things just as we found them. Murray hastened to call me up and——"

"Did Murray disturb anything?"

"Nothing, sir, on my word." Murray spoke for himself, a rugged man of twenty in a blouse and overalls. "I ran back to the clubhouse at once when I found the body and told the constable. I waited there till he came. That's all I know——"

"One moment," Wayne interrupted. "Who owns this bag of clubs?"

"No one in particular," Murray told him. "It belongs to the club. It's for the use of visitors, or members who happen to be without their own."

"Is it usually kept in the clubhouse?"

"Yes, sir. There's half a dozen in all."

"Do you know who used this yesterday afternoon?"

"No, sir. I am always away Monday afternoon and evening, there seldom being any playing after that over the week's end."

"At what time did you leave?"

"Three o'clock."

"Who then was in the clubhouse?"

"No one, or on the links," said Murray. "I locked the door and went home. I had an appointment later with Jake Furbush, the college janitor, and was with him till ten o'clock."

"Are you sure, Murray, that these clubs were in the house when you left!" Detective Wayne eyed him more intently. He wondered why he was so explicit as to his own movements, and whether his absence on that particular day had any bearing on the crime. He thought, too, that he detected a some-

what shifty expression in the caretaker's mottled gray eyes.

"Yes, sir, I'm sure of it," Murray said emphatically. "I can't say, of course, what member of the club used them afterward. Some one certainly did. There's nearly two hundred of them, including about forty women, and each of them has a key."

"No woman dealt these blows." Wayne turned abruptly and began a closer inspection of Hargrave's battered head. "The frontal bone of the skull is badly fractured."

"He was killed with the niblick," said Bagley, pointing to the club.

"I see," Wayne nodded. "The shape of the club's iron head can be detected in the form of the fracture. It was a strong arm, or one swayed by utter desperation, that caused such a break as this."

"He has been dead twelve hours, at least," said Doctor Gray, a physician among the several men on the putting green. "I would say even longer."

"Not much longer," Wayne said quickly. "It was light till near seven o'clock. This crime, however, was committed after dark."

"How do you deduce that?" Doctor Gray inquired.

"The blows were dealt directly from in front," Wayne pointed out. "If attempted by daylight, they would have been seen and warded off, or at least partly diverted."

"That's true."

"But there is no sign of any deviation in the brutal stroke. The iron broke the skull nearly in a line above the nose. It almost penetrated the brain. Nor is there any indication of a struggle," Wayne added, after a glance at the close cut greensward. "A violent struggle, or one of even brief duration, would have left evidence of it. I'm quite sure the blows were dealt in the dark," he repeated, quite naturally led into a temporary error.

"I don't agree with you," said Bagley bluntly. "Why was a golf player here after dark? He could not have seen to play the game," he forcibly argued. "That's absurd. It's——"

"A minor point, constable," Wayne cut in dryly. "I admit the significance of it, but an interview or altercation between Hargrave and his assailant may have preceded the assault and kept them here till after dark."

"That might be," Bagley admitted. "But no one saw them, Rodney, as far as we know. Nor any one else——"

"A young fellow in a gray golf suit was seen running across the upper end of the links shortly before dark," Murray interrupted. "One of the caddy boys who lives over in that direction saw him. He was too far away to recognize him, however, or to see him plainly."

"When did you see the caddy boy?" Wayne eyed him sharply again.

"He was out yonder a few minutes ago." Murray pointed to a group of men and boys on the links. "I don't see him now. His name is Timothy Green."

"I'll question him later," said the detective. "Have you learned anything about Hargrave's movements early last evening?" he inquired of the constable.

"He dined at home, sir," said an elderly man near by. "I'm his manservant, James Volney, and my wife is the housekeeper. I came here as soon as I heard of the murder."

"What more can you tell us?" Wayne questioned.

"Very little, sir," said Volney. "Mr. Hargrave dined about six o'clock and then left the house. He remarked that he was going to the club. He did not say whether he meant the golf club, however, or the Unity Club, where he often spent the evening; but in either case, sir, he would have taken the back road around the golf course."

"Was he in the habit of walking, Volney, and of going that way?"

"He was, sir," Volney bowed. "He liked that walk and the woods, sir, and he nearly always went that way."

"Did he mention any appointment at the club, or what other intentions he may have had?"

"Not a word. I know he went to the safe in the library just before leaving, however, but I don't know for what. I suppose he needed some money."

"Theft wasn't the motive for the crime," Bagley quickly asserted. "That's plain enough. If killed for robbery, his watch and diamond stud would have been taken."

"His pocketbook also is here." Detective Wayne, then crouching near the body, was gravely searching the dead man's pockets. "It contains quite a sum of money. It does not appear, in fact, that any of his personal property was touched."

"That's plain enough," Bagley repeated, turning to scan the ground a few yards away. "Robbery certainly wasn't the motive. One with half an eye could see that."

"But what other incentive could the assassin have had?" Doctor Gray doubtfully questioned.

"We'll dig it out sooner or later," replied the constable. "Here's one of Hargrave's intimate friends. He can help us, perhaps, and suggest a possible solution of the problem. They were very close friends for years. We are seeking the motive for this crime, Mr. Dillon, and are very much in the dark," he explained with a deferential bow to the wealthy stockbroker.

Dillon had approached from a powerful green roadster, in which he had arrived in the back road while the constable was speaking. He had approached hurriedly, gazing with a horrified expression at Hargrave's body, evidently he was deeply moved by the violent death of his old friend.

"What a terrible fate!" he exclaimed. "I was told of it just as I was starting for the city. I deferred going, of course, and came here at once."

Detective Wayne heard him, but he then had turned away. He had made a singular discovery while replacing Hargrave's pocketbook. Clinging to his right wrist and twined partly around one of the dead man's fingers was a single wavy brown hair about six inches long, which till then had escaped observation. Wayne eyed it narrowly for a moment. Then he removed it and studied it more closely, and finally he arose and turned away to place it between two leaves of his notebook, taking care that he was not seen.

"It strikes me, Bagley, that you should be seeking the assassin instead of his motive," Dillon said. "Are there any clews? Is his identity suspected?"

"Not yet," Bagley told him. "You have been pretty close to him. I hoped you might aid us."

"Aid you in what way? I'd be glad to, of course."

"Do you know of any one whose enmity he had incurred?"

"None bitter enough to have killed him," Dillon said doubtfully. "He was touchy and violent when opposed and many disliked him, but few men become angry enough to commit murder. He had a row with Ralph Appleton in the club a few evenings ago, but I don't think it went any further. I know of only two persons, Bagley, who regarded him with actual enmity, or so I have heard him say," he deliberately added. "I refer to Mrs. Harvey Mortimer and her niece, Ora Gordon, who——"

"One moment!" Detective Wayne turned quickly and dropped the niblick he was inspecting. "You're speaking, Dillon, of two very wealthy and prominent ladies, whose character is beyond reproach. I think you understand me. Don't bring the name of any person into

this matter unless you have adequate grounds for doing so."

"My reason for doing so is very generally known," Dillon retorted, frowning. "They for years have been fighting Hargrave in a lawsuit which——"

"Lawsuits are contested in the courts, Dillon, not on a golf course and with golf clubs," Wayne sternly interrupted.

"Humph!" Dillon ejaculated. "You show fire, Wayne, like a hard struck flint," he said with a tinge of irony in his cold voice.

"Let it go at that," Wayne advised. He turned abruptly to the constable. "I'm not through here, Bagley, but am going to the clubhouse for a few minutes," he said with startling brusqueness. "I'll notify the coroner. Tell him when he arrives, in case I don't get him personally, that as far as I'm concerned he may order the body removed. Get the crowd out of that road and off the links and send them about their business. Come, Murray, and go with me," he said sharply. "Be quick about it."

Detective Wayne did not wait for an answer, or to note the effect of his sudden command. He hurried the surprised caretaker across the links to where the red-roofed clubhouse with its deep verandas stood amid a clump of trees at the head of the extensive course.

"Did you find the doors and windows closed, Murray, when you came here this morning?" Wayne spoke for the first time when they went up the steps.

"I did, sir, as usual." Murray gazed furtively at his serious face. "I'm always careful to lock them."

"If no one broke in, then one of the members must have entered and taken out the bag of clubs."

"That's how it looks to me."

"Or some other person to whom a member had loaned his key," Wayne added.

"That might be," Murray agreed. "They sometimes do that."

"Is there a printed list of the members?"

"Yes, sir. I think I can find one in the directors' room upstairs."

"Get it for me," Wayne said curtly. "I'll notify the coroner while waiting. Where's the telephone?"

Murray pointed to a small office in one corner of the building, then went to the floor above to hunt for the required list.

Wayne learned that the coroner then was on his way to the scene of the crime. He then felt reasonably sure that a man had committed it. He reasoned, too, that that eliminated the women in the club, unless one of them had loaned her key to a man the previous afternoon, and he determied to telephone to each and settle that point quickly. He could think of only one whom he knew to be a member. Murray not having returned with the list, the mere thought of her softened Rodney Wayne's fine features and brought a tinge of red to his cheeks.

Rodney Wayne rang her up, but he did not recognize the voice that came over the wire.

"Well?"

"May I speak with Miss Gordon, if she is not engaged?"

"Miss Gordon is talking."

"Oh—pardon!" Wayne said quickly. "This is Mr. Wayne, Rodney Wayne, of the State police. You know—that is, you perhaps remember me."

No answer. Ten seconds passed. They seemed strangely long to the detective, vainly listening, wondering why she did not reply, and with a vague impression that there might be some serious reason.

"Oh, yes! I—I do remember!" Wayne's strained ears heard her quick nervous gasp and detected the sudden impulsiveness with which she finally spoke, as if dread and apprehension had briefly overcome her. "Yes, indeed, Mr. Wayne, I remember you. Can I do

anything for you?" she inquired, faltering.

"I merely want to know, Miss Gordon, whether you loaned your key to the golf clubhouse to any person yesterday afternoon?" Wayne told her.

"Loaned my key—certainly not!" she replied. Wayne heard her laugh, but it sounded strangely forced and unnatural. He wondered whether it was designed to dispel any misgivings her first hesitation had aroused. He was keyed to a tension quick to appreciate every possibility. "No, indeed, Mr. Wayne, I did not. I never have loaned my key. May I ask what—what led you to think so?"

"I did not think so, Miss Gordon," he replied. "I merely wish to learn whether any lady member of the club loaned a key."

"But why? What is the occasion?"

"Because Richard Hargrave was found dead on the golf links this morning. He was murdered early last evening by some unknown person or persons who——"

Wayne stopped short. There was no mistaking the two sounds that came over the wire. One was a moan of overwhelming horror—and then the dull thud of a body.

"Good heavens!" Wayne muttered. "The girl had fainted." He waited a few seconds, knowing she had not replaced the telephone receiver, and he listened vainly for a sound denoting that assistance had come to her. Then he called sharply at brief intervals: "Hello! Hello! Hello!"

No answer.

Murray returned just then and hurried into the room. "Here's a printed list, sir," he cried. "I had a bit of trouble finding it, but——"

"That's enough!" Wayne jabbed the receiver into the hook, then sprang up and thrust the list into his pocket. "That's all. I'll return later," he cried, looking strangely white and perturbed as he rushed out of the house to hasten to the palatial home of Mrs. Harvey Mortimer and Ora Gordon.

Murray gazed after him, brows knitting, and with a singular look of malevolence in his shifty gray eyes.

"That gink has something on his mind," he muttered. "I wonder just what. 'Tain't always safe to butt too deep into things. If he does—he might lose his mind!"

CHAPTER III.

SEALED LIPS.

RODNEY WAYNE was not impelled to the step he was taking because he suspected Ora Gordon of the murder. Sentiments quite the reverse of suspicion actuated him. He was sure she had fainted and no one had immediately come to revive her, or he would have heard some significant sound through the open telephone. He feared she might lie in a swoon indefinitely, and he knew he could get to her home in a very few minutes.

On the other hand Detective Wayne was not one to ignore his own impressions and blind himself to the import of disagreeable facts. A score of questions forced themselves upon him.

"Why did she faint when told of the murder? Was that the cause? Was it the first she knew of it? In that case she did not commit it or have any hand in it, or she would have been prepared to hear it discussed, and surely would not have fainted at the mere mention of it by telephone," he reasoned after hastening from the clubhouse.

"It's deucedly significant, nevertheless," he went on. "So was the moan I distinctly heard the moment I spoke of the murder. So was her first hesitation and her faltering voice. Was it because a detective called her up? Had she any reason to fear the police? If so, what reason? Did she fear that

her aunt, because of the bitter animosity of Hargrave and a fear that he would beat her in the courts, had conspired with some one to put him away? Was that the cause of her sudden collapse? There surely is some reason why the milk is in the coconut, though I'm blessed if I can fathom it. They're not the type of women who commit crimes or resort even to duplicity."

Rodney Wayne was in a quandary when he arrived at the residence and rang the bell. It was a spacious old mansion, and only a quarer mile from the head of the golf course. An elderly butler came to the door.

"I called to ask about Miss Gordon," Wayne told him, tendering a card. "I was talking with her by telephone a few minutes ago when she suddenly stopped and I heard her fall to the floor. I feared she had fainted and might not be found unless I hastened to inform some one."

"Miss Gordon did faint, sir," replied the butler. "But she now is quite——"

"Take Mr. Wayne to the library, Joseph." Mrs. Mortimer spoke from the hall above. "I wish to talk with him. I will come down in a moment."

Wayne entered and glanced up the stairway that wound upward with graceful curves through the deep shadowy hall. He had a glimpse at sumptuously furnished parlors, reflecting the opulence and taste of the two women. They appeared impressively grand in the subdued light through windows clouded with heavy ropelike lace and filmy inner curtains. The library was very elegant. On one of the walls, between a beautifully carved pipe organ and a broad alcove window, hung a striking life-size portrait of Ora Gordon. Wayne gazed at it as if enraptured. Through the window could be seen the sweep of the side lawn, the fine old trees and artistic flower beds, the driveway to the garage and the rear gate and hedged walk—where she had stolen unseen into the house after her encounter with Hargrave.

Detective Wayne had not waited long when Mrs. Mortimer joined him, a stately, gray-haired woman of sixty, looking very imperial in a lavender morning gown, but having a very gracious manner.

"I hope I am not detaining you," she said, shaking hands with him. "I really feel, Mr. Wayne, quite well acquainted with you. Ora often reads to me the newspaper stories of your very successfull detective work. I think she is quite proud of you, in fact, you being one of our own townsmen," she added, laughing affably. "I felt that I must talk with you briefly, at least."

"Certainly." Wayne would not have dared to tell her just how he felt. "That's very good of Miss Gordon, but I guess the newspapers often exaggerate my success."

"I would expect you to say that. Modesty and valor go hand in hand," she replied, smiling. "Ora also insists upon seeing you. She will come down presently."

"I'm glad to know she is able to, Mrs. Mortimer," Wayne said, taking a chair to which she invited him. "I heard her fall and was sure she had fainted. I hastened here, therefore, lest she might not revive or be found immediately."

"My maid heard her fall. We did not find her, however, for two or three minutes. She now is quite herself again."

"I feared I alarmed her by telling her too abruptly of the murder of Mr. Hargrave," Wayne said tentatively.

"Shocked, perhaps, but not alarmed her," Mrs. Mortimer corrected. "She would have no cause for alarm. Her fainting spell, however, was chiefly due to her own condition. She did not sleep well and was very pale and nervous this morning," she explained. "She was resting here in the library when you

called," she added with a glance at the telephone. "I was astonished when Ora told me of the murder after we revived her. Do tell me the particulars. I am sorry for Mr. Hargrave, though we have had much trouble with him and have never been friendly."

"There at present is not much to tell," Wayne replied. He had watched in vain for the slightest sign of duplicity. "His body was found on the golf links this morning."

"Is his assailant known, or any person suspected?"

"Not yet."

"When was the crime committed?"

"Early last evening, Mrs. Mortimer, as near as we now can tell."

"Is the motive known or suspected?"

"Not at present. Investigations are being made which may disclose it, but we now are wholly in the dark," Wayne gravely admitted. "We have found no evidence on which a definite theory can be built."

"The truth may never be learned then."

"Possibly."

"In that case—but here is Ora." Mrs. Mortimer digressed abruptly. "Come in, dear! You're feeling better, eh?" she queried, smiling.

Neither of them had heard her on the stairs. She had paused there for several minutes, listening, scarcely breathing, with her heart crushed under its burden of horror. Not until she heard that nothing definite was known, that no one yet was suspected, did a look of relief appear in her drawn white face. She had confided in no one. She had resolved that she would not do so. She wanted time to reflect just where she stood and what devolved upon her, to determine her duty and to measure the consequences. For she felt that the blows were justified, even though unintentionally fatal; that her fear of Hargrave was warranted, and that she had killed him in self-defense.

"But who would believe me?" she had repeatedly asked herself. "Our bitter animosity, our pending lawsuit, my conduct since the encounter, my flight after striking him, not dreaming that he was seriously hurt, my stealthy return home and the occasion for it, my unusual silence, not having confided even in my aunt—all would seem to condemn me. No one would believe me."

Ora Gordon had resolved to hide the truth and take the risk of exposure and augmented distrust, reasoning fallaciously, with her brain stunned by the appalling tragedy, and completely overlooking the fact that each necessary equivocation must lead to others, and perhaps to an edifice of lies that finally would collapse and crush her. She was very pale when she entered the library, but she was outwardly composed, her mind fixed, and her nerves as tense as bowstrings.

"Dear me, Mr. Wayne, what a weak sister you must think me!" Ora approached to shake hands with him. She tried to assume her customary easy grace and girlish abandon, but she did not quite succeed. "I neglected to wish you good morning by telephone. Let me do so now." She forced a smile to her pale face. "I am awfully ashamed for causing you so much trouble."

"But I have been to no trouble," Wayne replied. "I regret I told you so abruptly of the murder."

"That did not cause me to faint," Ora said quickly. "I was not myself this morning. I did not feel well and took no breakfast."

"I am glad that you feel that I was not the cause."

"Far from it, Mr. Wayne, I assure you."

"I was telling your aunt——"

The doorbell rang and Mrs. Mortimer rose and excused herself, saying that she expected her lawyer and must not detain him. Ora took a chair near the fireplace.

"I heard what you said to her, Mr. Wayne, as I came down," she remarked, gazing at him. She wondered whether he was resorting to subterfuge and covertly suspected her. She had seen him often about town and at intervals met him on formal occasions. She had secretly admired him, and she hoped for more than one reason that he was not deceiving her. "I don't quite see why you inquired about my key," she ventured, feeling her way.

"Only because I suspect a member of the club committed the crime," Wayne explained. "Not one of the women, however," he quickly added. "One of them may yesterday have loaned her key to a man, and I want to eliminate that possibility at once, before looking up the whereabouts of the male members at the time of the crime."

"Oh, I see," said Ora. She breathed easier. Her tense nerves relaxed. "As I told you, Mr. Wayne, I never have loaned my key."

"That certainly eliminates you from any connection with the case."

"Eliminates me!" She gazed at him reprovingly. "I hope you do not suspect me of knowing anything about it."

"Quite the reverse, Miss Gordon, I assure you," Wayne said earnestly. "I could not suspect you of anything wrong."

"Thank you." Ora blushed again. The fervor with which he unconsciously had spoken did not escape her, and a singular expression lurked for an instant in the depths of her dark eyes. "It's very nice of you, indeed, to say so," she told him. "Was Mr. Hargrave killed with one of the golf clubs?" she inquired.

"He was," Wayne replied. "His skull was fractured with a niblick."

"How dreadful!" said Ora. Her voice was steady, her features composed, but a deathly chill settled upon her from head to foot. Now she could not doubt her guilt, and she wondered in how far she was threatened. "Were any other persons on the links at the time?" she asked.

"The exact time is not known," Wayne told her. "Presumably, Miss Gordon, the crime was committed after dark. As far as I have learned, only one person was seen on the links just before dark. That was a young man, or youth, wearing a gray golf suit."

Ora Gordon heard him without the quiver of an eyelash. "Has he been identified?" she inquired.

"Not yet," said the detective.

"Who saw him?"

"A lad named Timothy Green, but at too great a distance to recognize him, or definitely describe him."

"That's unfortunate." Ora breathed easier again. "You may contrive to find the young man."

"Possibly."

"Or he may come forward voluntarily and make himself known," Ora added.

"That is the very best step he could take," Wayne told her impressively.

"Indeed?" Ora eyed him more intently. She could not detect in his face or voice any covert purpose, but his remark seemed to stab and rebuke her. "Why do you say so?" she asked. "Would that be your opinion, Mr. Wayne, under all circumstances?"

"Invariably," he told her earnestly. "Experience has taught me, Miss Gordon, that there can be no circumstances under which frank and straightforward conduct is not the best step one can take. A criminal is wise who confesses his crime and seeks mercy of the courts. The fugitive from the law, which in the end will surely overtake him, is better off the moment he gives himself up. Sooner or later, Miss Gordon, atonement in one form or another is absolutely unavoidable. But I weary you," he said less gravely, seeing plainly that his indirect effort to induce her to confide in him was proving futile. She

had sighed and pushed her wavy brown hair from her brow. Wayne thought of the one in his notebook and arose to go. "Think it over, Miss Gordon," he advised, smiling. "You may decide that I am right."

"Possibly," Ora admitted. She arose and walked with him through the hall. "I have come to one conclusion, Mr. Wayne, at least," she told him.

"Indeed?" he queried, smiling again. "What conclusion is that?"

"That you are very much of a man and a very kind and considerate detective," she said with impulsive fervor. "If I ever am in a serious position, Detective Wayne, one so serious that I feel that aid and advice are imperative, you are the one man to whom I will appeal."

"Really?" Wayne eagerly questioned. "You cannot imagine, Miss Gordon, how good that sounds to me," he said earnestly, then added, as he saw plainly that she did not mean then and there. "Do please remember it, will you?"

"I will," she promised, as she gave him her hand. "I will both remember it—and do it."

"Good!" Wayne warmly took her hand in both of his. "When you do, Miss Gordon, believe me—I will turn heaven and earth to aid you."

Ora watched him down the steps and walk. There was a momentary light in her eyes that Wayne would have given a great deal to have seen. She pressed her hands over her heart, telling herself in low, quavering whispers:

"He does not suspect me. He does not think that I did it. I was not recognized by the caddy boy. No evidence against me has been found. I am reasonably safe from suspicion. But how awful it is—how horrible!"

The last vestige of color had faded from her face. It took on a look of despair and anguish too poignant for verbal description. She walked to the stairs, swaying unsteadily, and returned to her room, where she sat down on the bed, twining her hands on her lap and staring vacantly at the floor.

"The best step would be to be frank about it and confess, he said," she muttered. "But he did not know. He could not have known—and have hidden it from me. How could I tell him? How can I confess—that I struck and killed him. Oh, the horror of it—the awful, awful horror of it!" She moaned, shivering with frightful distress. "I cannot confess. I have gone too far to confess. None will believe me. It will be better, far better, if the truth is never known. No good can come from it—only shame, imprisonment, and—no, no, I will never confess it!" She started up a frenzy of despair and frantic determination. "I will never confess it—never! I will carry the hideous secret to my grave."

CHAPTER IV.

WAYNE DECLARES HIMSELF.

RODNEY WAYNE was upset. Though sentimentally unchanged, and in fact very much elated by what Mrs. Mortimer had told him of Ora's undreamed-of interest in him, and by her own fervor and what she had said to him when he was leaving—he had, nevertheless suffered a terrible jolt. His earlier deductions, and his belief that Ora was ignorant of the murder, had been rudely shattered.

"I shot wide, very wide," he censured himself after leaving her. "I must reload and do better. She knows something about the murder, but for some reason she is resolved not to disclose it. It would have been a mistake to accuse her and to have revealed my suspicions. I could prove nothing, nor would she have yielded to persuasion. But I cannot believe that she killed Dick Hargrave. What does she know, then, or how is she involved?" he asked him-

self, deeply mystified by her extraordinary conduct. "Did she see the crime committed? Is she trying to shield some one? Was she assaulted by Hargrave and rescued by some one who killed him, and whom she now aims to protect? That hardly seems probable. Homicide would be justifiable in that case and secrecy unnecessary," he reasoned. "There certainly is something under the surface which I do not yet suspect. Ora Gordon is in wrong in some way and I'll not sleep till I've pulled her out and set her right."

Hope had taken root and stimulating aspirations were springing up. He told himself with grim determination that he would go out at once and get the goods. He did not return to the clubhouse immediately. He hunted up Timothy Green, instead, and found him in the back yard of his home near the golf course, a freckled, bright-eyed boy of ten years.

"I'm told you are the lad, Tim, who saw a young man run across the links last evening," he said with friendly familiarity.

"Yes, sir," Tim answered brightly. "I told Joe Murray about him this morning."

"I want you to go and show me where you saw him, as near as you can tell."

"I can tell pretty near." Tim consented quite eagerly. "He came from the other side of the course, away over there near the tenth hole, where Mr. Hargrave was killed, and he was running sort of crosswise up the links. I didn't wait to watch him, sir, so I don't know where he went. I was hiking home to supper."

"Good for you," Wayne approved, smiling. "About what time was it, Tim?"

"Around half past six. It might have been a little later."

"Hargrave left home about six," Wayne mused. "That seems like a close connection. I must round up that young man. Can you describe him, Tim?" he inquired.

"No, sir; he was too far away. But I'm sure he wore a cap, sir, and a gray golf suit."

Wayne gazed across the links while the lad led the way. A hill completely hid the immediate scene of the crime and much of the distant back road. They had covered a quarter mile when Tim stopped abruptly and gazed around.

"He was about here when I saw him," he said. "And he was running that way," he pointed.

Detective Wayne scrutinized the ground in that locality for several minutes, and he finally found what he was seeking. He paid the lad and sent him home, and then he examined more carefully—an indentation in the greensward. It was the print of a slender shoe, or more precisely the narrow-pointed toe of one, obviously caused by a person running. Presently, too, Wayne found another, showing the shape of the heel and the exact length of the shoe.

"Much too small and narrow for a man," he muttered, frowning perplexedly. "Running that way, eh? Almost directly toward her home. Was the lad mistaken, or was she in male attire, or a golf suit very like it and designed for this outdoor sport?"

Wayne was convinced by this evidence. He was sure that Ora Gordon was the person, and that she had fled from the scene of the crime. His heart sank a little when he realized all that this signified.

"Had she been using the clubs? Did she take them from the clubhouse, instead of bringing her own?" Wayne asked himself. "What really occurred at the tenth hole? Did Hargrave see and accost her? They were far from friendly. Did he insult her? Was she rescued by some man, who killed him and fled in another direction? She surely could not deal the blows that killed him. There must be something

more to this than I yet have a line on," he again told himself.

"The crime was committed before dark, instead of after, as I deduced. The location is one precluding observation except from the back road and a small section of the links on that side of the hill." He gazed that way briefly, frowning darkly. "Hang it, I must sharpen up! A dull tool will not cut a knot, nor a dull brain solve a knotty problem."

Detective Wayne was irritated by his mistakes, despite that his deductions had seemed logical. He now was doubly worried about Ora, her threatening situation, her extraordinary conduct and evident desperate determination to hide the truth. All this put him in a more aggressive and combative mood and aroused in him a streak few men would venture to oppose.

"I'll be hanged if it shall baffle me," he muttered determinedly.

Wayne returned to the clubhouse. A score of members had gathered and were earnestly discussing the crime. One of the first he saw was a tall young man alone on the west veranda, whom Dillon had mentioned on the links a short time before.

"Good morning, Appleton." Wayne approached, greeting him brusquely. "Why did you have a row with Hargrave a few nights ago?" he asked bluntly.

"Humph!" Appleton ejaculated, flushing. "Who told you about it?"

"Andy Dillon mentioned it."

"He'd better mind his own business. Was he trying to cast suspicion upon me? That would be like him."

"Possibly," Wayne allowed. He had never liked Dillon, or had much confidence in him.

"There was only one cause for the row, Rodney," Appleton then said frankly. "Hargrave spoke of Ora Gordon to me in a way I did not like. I told him if he mentioned her name again I'd wring his neck. I'd have done it, too."

"I hope so," Wayne said tersely.

"He was half stewed, Rodney, as usual," Appleton added.

"Hand it to me straight." Wayne eyed him keenly. "Did you see him last evening?"

"I did," Appleton instantly admitted. "I have been waiting to tell you. It was soon after six o'clock. He was coming from his home after dinner. I was riding my mare through the back road and was about a hundred yards beyond the putting green where his body was found."

"Did you see any one on the links?"

"Not a soul," Appleton said earnestly. "But I couldn't see that part of the course. The woods intervene."

"Did you speak with Hargrave?"

"I did. He stopped me and said he wanted to talk with me. I dismounted and tied my horse. She's a bit high-strung."

"What did Hargrave want?"

"Why he had the absurd idea in his muddled brain that Miss Gordon and I were contemplating matrimony. We are good friends, nothing more. But Hargrave told me in his boorish way that he wanted her himself, and that he would pay me very handsomely to end my relations with her. That's all there was to it except——"

"Except what?" Wayne queried.

"Except that I told him I would break every bone in his body, Rodney, if he ever spoke to me again," Appleton said, his eyes glowing. "I'd have done it, too."

"I hope so," Wayne repeated, shaking hands with him. "Did that end it?"

"Immediately. I rode away and left him scowling by the roadside. I don't know where he went, or why and by whom he was killed."

"I'm glad you told me, Ralph,"

Wayne informed him. "But I do not suspect you. I know you too well. Who is that fellow with Murray, the caretaker?" he asked abruptly, observing the two men near an outbuilding several rods away. "Do you know him?"

"By sight," said Appleton. "His name is Jake Furbush. He is employed as a janitor, I think, at the Garside College."

"Does he come here often?"

"I don't think so. I never saw him before."

Wayne furtively watched both men while speaking. Furbush was a dark, cheaply clad man about his own age and build. He had a thin mouth and crafty eye, which the detective was quick to notice. Wayne recalled, too, that Murray had mentioned Furbush that morning.

"What brought him here for the first time, if it really is the first time?" Wayne asked himself. "Did he come to learn about the murder? Is that what they are talking about?"

He did not like the expression of either man, neither of whom had observed him, but he decided not to question them. He said a parting word to Appleton, then turned abruptly and strode around to the front of the house, where half a dozen motor cars were standing, including Dillon's powerful green roadster. He himself was talking with a friend near by and he turned quickly when the detective approached.

"Hello, Wayne, what do you make of this crime?" he asked eagerly.

Detective Wayne paused. He nodded to several friends near by before replying. His eyes had a gleam, however, and his lips a downward slant that would have warned most men not to be so familiar.

"I am not in the habit of stating my opinion of a crime, Mr. Dillon, while investigating it," he said quietly.

"Oh, is that so?" Dillon flushed quickly. "You might make an exception of this case. We all are interested. I have taken a day away from my business, in fact, hoping to aid you to ferret out the truth," he declared with insinuating inflection.

"That is commendable, no doubt, but I think I can accomplished it without any aid from you," Wayne told him pointedly.

"Do you?"

"I certainly do."

"I hope so—but I'm not so sure of it." Dillon added the last with a sneer, frowning resentfully under the detective's frigid scrutiny.

"Aren't you? Let me tell you something." Wayne came a step nearer to him. "I'm going to ferret out the truth. I'm going to learn who killed Hargrave and why. I'm going to do a little more than that. I'm going to arrest his assassin and see that he pays the penalty for the crime," he sternly predicted. "Take it from me, Dillon—I'll not sleep nights till I've done all that."

"I hope so," Dillon repeated. His flush had faded. His cheeks were very white. But the curve of contempt still was in his thin lips, and his eyes had a threatening glint. "I hope you may speedily accomplish it. Dick Hargrave was my best friend, Wayne, and a man whom I loved and——"

"You should pick your friends more carefully, Dillon," Wayne cut in curtly. "It's not in my nature to be mealy-mouthed under some circumstances. Dick Hargrave had money, but he had very little else to commend him. You know it, Dillon, as well as I. Are you going that way, Mercer?" He turned abruptly to a friend who was starting his car. "Allow me to ride with you. Drop me at the entrance to the old mill road, will you?" he requested, after they sped away. "I want to inspect that part of it back of the golf course."

CHAPTER V.

THE BREACH.

RODNEY WAYNE plodded alone through the back road. He wanted to look over the ground in search of additional evidence. He had not much faith in Constable Bagley's discernment. It was an old road, very seldom used by motor cars since the construction of State highways in other localities, though several had ventured that morning to the scene of the crime. It was half past ten.

Half a mile brought Detective Wayne in sight of the links. They were deserted. The coroner had gone, the body had been removed, and the crowd had dispersed. Not a solitary person could be seen in any direction. At an offshoot of the narrow road, where an old grass-grown lane led to the ruins of an old grist mill deeper into the woods and out of view from the road, Wayne suddenly stopped to look at some tire tracks in the soft earth.

"That's strange," he muttered. "Who drove his car in there? Certainly not to make a turn, for the shrubs on neither side are bent or broken. Not to go to the old mill, for there's nothing to go for. It has not been occupied for a dozen years. The tracks show plainly that a car was driven in and backed out."

Their sharp divergence from other tracks in the road had caught the detective's eye. The circumstance seemed suspicious. He followed the tracks about thirty yards into the lane, where a bend to the left and the intervening shrubbery would have hidden the car from observation from the road.

"It stopped here," Wayne said to himself. "The tracks end and are deeper. Here's the mark of a triangular patch, or a repaired blowout, on the left front shoe. Here, too, are drippings of oil from the motor. The quantity shows that the car must have stood here several minutes, possibly half an hour. But what was the motive?" he asked himself. "Why would any visitor to the scene of the crime have driven in here. It may be——"

Wayne broke off abruptly and crouched to examine the oil drippings. He found that several drops on a small stone were quite dry. He straightened up, eyes lighting, and with a momentary thrill of elation over the discovery.

"The car was here as long ago as last evening," he reasoned. "Oil would not have dried in less time. Was the car concealed here for some purpose? Were the occupants waiting for some one? Was the owner hiding here to intercept Dick Hargrave? Did he have an appointment with him, or know that he probably was coming this way? This is significant. It breaks new ground. It points to other and more plausible possibilities. It's the most encouraging discovery I've made."

Wayne was thinking of Ora Gordon. He recalled her look of distress and weariness when she pushed a wave of her brown hair from her brow when he ended his interview with her. That reminded him of the hair in his notebook, which he had found clinging to the wrist and finger of the murdered man. He took it out and examined it. It was about the same color, but not as long as most of Ora's luxuriant hair.

Wayne studied a tiny particle of the root on one end of it. It felt strangely hard and brittle. It aroused a suspicion. He turned the hair between his thumb and finger with a lateral movement, by which one can easily determine the root end of a broken hair.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, taking out his lens. "This isn't the root. It's on the wrong end. It's a particle of glue," he declared to himself while inspecting it. "This is not Ora Gordon's hair. It came from a wig, or a false beard. Clinging to Hargrave's wrist and finger, eh? Plainly he either

throttled or grappled with a man wearing a disguise."

Rodney Wayne did not linger to measure the full significance of his discovery. He replaced the hair in his notebook and hurried out to the road. Presently, coming from a point farther up the road and beyond the putting green where Hargrave was found, he saw Constable Bagley running toward him, evidently in some excitement.

"I've got him!" he cried exultantly, coming nearer. "I've got him, Rodney, as sure as death and taxes. A bloodhound has nothing on me when it comes to nosing out a trail."

"Got whom?" Wayne asked curtly, impressed only by the flushed face and glowing black eyes of the constable.

"The man who killed Dick Hargrave," Bagley confidently declared. "I found him by the roadside up yonder where a horse evidently was tied last evening. Prints of his off-front shoe show the mark of a bar-plate to prevent the hoof from spreading. I've talked with Hogan, the blacksmith. Only one man in town rides a horse shod with a bar-plate. He's Ralph Appleton. He killed Hargrave. He——"

"Wait!" Wayne checked him bluntly. "Don't fall over yourself, Bagley, in your haste to make good. Appleton knows nothing about the murder."

"Don't you believe it," Bagley roundly advised. "Why was this horse tied there last night? Only so's she couldn't bolt while he was doing the job," he forcibly argued. "Knows nothing about it—nonsense! Why hasn't he come forward, then, and said he was there and why?"

"He has," Wayne said tersely. "He told me why at the clubhouse. I'll now tell you, Bagley, and show you how easily a man may drive too fast and plunge into a ditch."

Detective Wayne confided nothing more, however, and the incident served only to remind him of Appleton's assertion that Dillon was trying to cast suspicion upon him. He felt sure Appleton had no definite grounds for it, but in view of his own last discoveries it was very suggestive. Wayne wondered whether it was true, whether Dillon had some sinister interest and motive in taking a day away from his business, and whether his intimate relations with Hargrave had been strained.

"Why would he kill his best friend?" Wayne asked himself after leaving the constable. "Those tire tracks are too small for his big green roadster, anyhow. As far as that goes a man as well known as he would not attempt such a crime without a disguise and a strange car. He would need both to preclude identification. He drives to the city each day. It may be—by heck, I'll look into it!"

Wayne had no other grounds for suspicion, nor could he think of a plausible motive, or find any additional evidence then and there; but his impression was so strong that he resolved to sift it to the bottom. At two o'clock that afternoon, very carefully disguised, he entered Dillon's office in the city, where he found the stockbroker's clerk, Mabel Draper, reading the noon edition of a newspaper.

"Is Mr. Dillon here?" Wayne inquired.

"No, sir." Miss Draper gave her fluffy auburn hair an elevating poke. "He's not in town to-day. That is, he hasn't come to his office. A friend of his was murdered last night." She displayed the conspicuous leader lines in the newspaper. "I guess he's some upset. No wonder!" she glibly declared. "He was talking with him here yesterday afternoon."

"I have read about it," Wayne said evasively, when she tendered the paper. "I'm sorry for Hargrave. I knew him slightly. Here yesterday, was he?"

"Just after the market closed," and Mabel nodded. "I remember the exact

time because Mr. Dillon said I might go at once and have the rest of the day."

"That so?" Wayne smiled. He wondered whether Dillon had a covert motive in letting her go after Hargrave entered, whether he had made sure of a strictly private interview. He did not quite like the girl's manner, nor a subtle look of cunning in her gray eyes. "That made it pleasant for you," he added.

"Sure!" Mabel laughed. "I took in a movie."

"He and Hargrave were very good friends, I believe."

"None better. Mr. Hargrave always called here when in town."

"I presume on business," Wayne observed. "Was that his mission yesterday?"

"I don't know." Miss Draper suddenly eyed him suspiciously. "If I did, sir, I would not discuss it with a stranger. What's your business?" she asked pertly. "Anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing, thank you," Wayne told her. He saw she no longer would be communicative. "My name is Brown. I want to talk with Mr. Dillon about some investments," he explained suavely. "It will keep, however, all right. I'll call again in a day or two. He might be in town without having come to his office," he remarked thoughtfully. "Where does he usually put his car?"

"In the Hanover garage," Mabel replied. "But I don't think he's in town. I know well enough he isn't," she added, reverting to the newspaper.

"Probably not. I'll try again."

The girl gazed after him when he went out. Distrust gleamed brighter in her mottled eyes. She was fond of her employer. She hoped Dillon liked her, too, and soon would feel that he could not be happy without her. She was eager to serve him and demonstrate her devotion. She demurred only briefly. Then she sprang up hurriedly, put on her hat and jacket, deftly tied a veil over her face, and followed the detective.

Wayne entered the Hanover garage a little later. He saw that the manager was engaged with two men in the office, so he sauntered over to a mechanic at work on one of the several cars.

"Andy Dillon been in to-day?" he inquired carelessly.

"Not to-day," said the other, glancing up.

"Is his car out of commission? I thought I saw him driving another yesterday."

"He was. We loaned him one about five o'clock to go to Brookville."

"That's about the time I saw him," Wayne remarked. "What was the trouble with his car?"

"We didn't know at first and had to hunt for it. A wire in the distributor got disconnected. He was in a hurry, however, so we loaned him a car while putting his in shape. He returned about eight o'clock and went home in his own car. The trouble wasn't much. That one in the corner is the one he had."

"I'll look it over," Wayne remarked. "I may have occasion to hire it."

"Certainly. Go as far as you like."

Detective Wayne did not go very far. He examined the wheel and the front cushions, and then he inspected both of the number plates. He found a smear of black grease on one of them. He was thinking deeply when he departed —so deeply that he did not notice the veiled girl lurking back of a large touring car near the door.

"I was right. That identical blowout patch is on the front shoe." Wayne had observed it almost immediately. "That was the hidden car and Dillon was the driver. Did he disconnect a wire in his distributor in order to borrow a strange car? Did he alter the number plates with black grease before going to Nordeck? Did he wear a disguise and later return for his own car?"

Wayne's grave face hardened ominously. He felt sure these questions must be answered in the affirmative. But that did not solve the problem—very far from it.

"What was his motive? Was it the outcome of Hargrave's visit?" he asked himself while returning to the railway station. "Why was Hargrave killed? What was gained by it? Why is Ora Gordon involved in the murder? Has she any covert interest in Dillon? Did she go to the links to meet him secretly? Is that why she wore that golf suit? Was the murder the result of a conspiracy with Dillon? Is she now bent upon shielding him? I'll find out before going after him," he abruptly decided. "I now have learned enough to warrant interrogating Ora Gordon straight from the shoulder. I'll see her again this evening."

Detective Wayne was not only baffled by the conflicting features of the case, but so deeply concerned about Ora Gordon that he proceeded with unusual circumspection. He resolved to confide at once in the suspected girl and end his distressing uncertainty. It was dark when he arrived in Nordeck and approached her home—only to shrink impulsively and dart back of a clump of shrubbery when the door was suddenly opened. There was no mistaking her fine figure and set white face in the lighted doorway—nor those of the visitor with whom she shook hands when parting.

"Good heavens!" Wayne gasped involuntarily. "It's the man himself—Andy Dillon!"

CHAPTER VI.

DRIVEN TO THE WALL.

MR. ANDREW JACKSON DILLON had only one object in calling on Ora Gordon. He thought himself a very keen and clever man. He was, in fact, very sure of it. He had said as much to Richard Hargrave, in that he never was in trouble he could not successfully overcome.

Consequently Dillon was not at all disturbed by Rodney Wayne's repellent coldness. He felt so sure of himself that he cared very little what the detective and Constable Bagley were doing. A man of his ability and social distinction, he said to himself, was superior to one or both. He moved in the best society. He had occasionally called on Mrs. Mortimer and her niece. He was readily admitted by the butler, therefore, and he appeared oblivious of Miss Gordon's unusual paleness and strained composure when she came down from her room and joined him in the library.

"Do I find you alone?" he inquired, after greeting her pleasantly.

"I am," Ora told him. No girl in all the world had ever felt so frightfully alone. "Auntie is attending a committee meeting at the Woman's Club," she informed him.

"Very good." Dillon smiled oddly. "I wanted to talk with you alone. I would have made it a point to do so."

"Indeed!" Ora eyed him curiously. "What have you to say to me, Mr. Dillon, that could not be said if my aunt were present?" she asked coldly.

"I will tell you presently. You have heard, of course, about the—— Pardon! Will you permit me?" Dillon rose, bowing, and without awaiting her consent he quietly closed the door. "It may be wise," he told her, smiling again. "You have heard, of course, about the murder of Richard Hargrave."

"I have," Ora replied. She steadied herself with an effort, meeting with unflinching eye his suspicious look. "I have been told about it, Mr. Dillon."

"The details?" Dillon queried, resuming his seat.

"I know only what Detective Wayne told me."

"Wayne?" Dillon's lips tightened.

"Has he been here? Why did he call to tell you about it?" he asked suspiciously.

"That was not his mission," said Ora.

"What was it?"

"He came to learn whether I had loaned my clubhouse key to any man. He suspects that either a stranger with a borrowed key, or one of the club members, must have killed Mr. Hargrave."

"Ah, I see!" Dillon's lips relaxed and he smiled again. "I feared at first that he possibly suspected—you."

"Suspected me!" Ora drew up a little. "Why should he suspect me, Mr. Dillon?" she asked haughtily. "That would be absurd. I wonder at your making such a remark. I hope you do not insinuate——"

"Insinuate—not at all!" Dillon interrupted. "As a matter of fact, Miss Gordon, I have called to speak quite plainly to you, and to confide something you have not even suspected. It's for your own good," he added.

"My own good!" Ora echoed, brows knitting. "What do you mean?" she demanded.

"Now don't get excited," Dillon advised. His eyes narrowed and his smooth voice hardened perceptibly. "What I have come to say should cause no resentment on your part. Quite the contrary, in fact. I am here as your friend, as I always have been. I want you to know just where you stand, and what is best for you to do."

"Best for me to do!" Ora repeated. "I don't understand you. What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean, Miss Gordon," Dillon drew a little nearer to her. "Your face shows it. You know who killed Dick Hargrave."

"Impossible!" Ora gasped, rising. "Your assertion is preposterous. You think——"

"Hush! Not so loud!" Dillon cautioned her quickly. "Secrecy for your own sake is imperative. You were seen, Miss Gordon, when you committed the crime. Wait——"

"Let me pass! I will not listen to you."

"You must listen." Dillon barred her way to the door and grasped her arm. "You shall not go, or call for help. I will not let you wreck your only hope under the blind and resentful impulse of a moment," he sternly told her. "You must hear me and take my advice. You really have no choice. You know the alternative. Your face shows it," he repeated. "Sit down and hear what I have to say."

Ora Gordon freed her arm and drew away from him. She had overcome the first impulse of her augmented horror and dismay. She seemed suddenly to realize all the exigencies of her terrible situation, and, though deathly pale, she drew back with sudden strange composure and sat down.

"That's right," Dillon said grimly. He took a chair directly in front of her and gazed fixedly at her drawn face. "Be wise and meet the situation calmly. You are in a bad mess, Miss Gordon. But there is always one way out of it. I'm here to help you and I think we can come to a very sensible understanding, a very reasonable agreement."

"I am quite calm now," said Ora. "What do you mean, Mr. Dillon, by a reasonable agreement?" she asked.

"You are a very wealthy girl, Miss Gordon," Dillon informed her with unmistakable significance.

"Oh, I see! You expect me to buy your silence."

"In your present position and under the threatening circumstances, Miss Gordon, you can very well afford to do so."

"You have called to blackmail me."

"That is a harsh term for it." Dillon frowned. "I have, on the contrary, called to help you out of a very desperate situation. In view of the fact that by doing so, instead of handing

you over to the police, I become an accessory after the crime, you should see that I am making you a very generous offer, Miss Gordon, as well as a hazardous one."

"I did not think you base enough for this." Ora eyed him with mingled bitterness and contempt.

"I have lost heavily in the stock market," Dillon explained. "I am desperately in need of money. You can supply me with it and never miss it. We both will derive a vast benefit from the transaction—and you have no alternative," he pointedly added.

"Perhaps not." Ora shrank for a moment. "Who saw me strike Mr. Hargrave?" she asked abruptly.

"I can, if necessary, produce two men who saw you," Dillon told her impressively. "I am acting partly for them, in fact, as they feared to undertake it and wanted a reliable agent. They confided the facts to me and——"

"And you are base enough to take advantage of them," Ora cut in bitterly.

"Obviously," Dillon coolly admitted. "I have told you why. I need money."

"If they saw me strike Mr. Hargrave, they must know that I was partly justified in doing so."

"They do not think so."

"It is true," Ora forcibly insisted. "I did not intend to kill him."

"You did kill him, nevertheless, and must meet the situation as it is, not as it might have been," Dillon said bluntly.

"Others may believe I was justified," Ora argued desperately. "I will give myself up. I will confess——"

"Wait!" Dillon checked her quickly. "That is the worst step you can take. Suppose these two witnesses testify that your assault was unprovoked, that Hargrave was merely talking with you and did not touch you, and that you struck him without any justifiable cause. Your own conduct since then would corroborate them," he pointed out with convincing assurance. "A tardy confession and incredible denials would not save you. Your case would be hopeless, Miss Gordon, absolutely hopeless."

Ora Gordon did not reply for a moment. She seemed to realize how hopelessly she was involved; that exposure, arrest, imprisonment, possibly conviction and execution, might speedily follow a refusal to submit to this blackmail and probable extortion.

"I must have time to consider it," she said, shuddering. "I cannot decide at once. How much money do you demand for your secrecy?"

"That can be agreed upon later," Dillon told her evasively. "I at present am merely warning you against any self-betrayal. You can see plainly to what it would lead. Your own conduct since the crime would convict you," he again argued insistently. "We can agree upon the payment, all right. Furthermore, if suspicion of you makes it necessary, we can fix the crime on another."

"On another?"

"Ralph Appleton, also, was seen disputing with Hargrave near the links at about the same time. He had had a previous row with him."

"Are you sure of that?" Ora questioned.

"Absolutely," Dillon informed her. He saw with a thrill of exultation that the girl's eyes had lighted a little. "You understand, of course, that it will not be necessary unless you are suspected. Does Detective Wayne suspect you?"

"Not at all," said Ora confidently. "I am sure of that."

"Good enough!" Dillon replied. "You may never be suspected. If you are we can fix the crime on Appleton. We can claim that he found the golf clubs on the links. Murray, the caretaker, thought some one left them there. I heard him tell the constable. You'll be in no danger, Miss Gordon, none whatever—if you accept my proposal."

"Are you sure of that, absolutely sure of it?"

"I am—absolutely!"

Ora Gordon hesitated; then a look of relief and determination came over her pale face. "I must have time to consider it," she repeated. "I will not decide at once. I will inform you to-morrow."

"I'll not call again," Dillon replied. "That might arouse suspicion. We must take no chances."

"True. I did not think of that," Ora admitted. "I will meet you as if by chance on the links, perhaps, or——"

"Impossible! We might be seen."

"In the back road, then, or the lane leading to the old grist mill," Ora recommended. "No one ever visits that lonely locality. I will go to the mill about sunset and meet you there."

"That will be safe enough," Dillon replied. "I'll join you there. The business won't take long. If it does, I'll see you safe across the links after dark. But don't fail, mind you!"

"I'll be there," Ora assured him. "I will have decided what to do by that time."

"You have only one sane thing to do. We'll leave it that way." Dillon rose to go. "In the meantime, however, not one word to others," he said sternly.

"That admonition seems entirely unnecessary," Ora said haughtily. "I give you my word I will reveal nothing before seeing you to-morrow evening."

"That's good enough for me," Dillon told her.

Ora Gordon went with him to the door and convinced him of her sincerity by shaking hands with him when they parted.

Rodney Wayne changed his mind. He decided not to confide in Ora Gordon. The circumstances did not seem to warrant it. Hidden by the shrubbery back of which he had darted, he saw her look of assurance, her tendered hand, and the expression of satisfaction on Dillon's face when he turned to come down the steps. Wayne heard him laugh softly as he passed, scarcely ten feet away, and he was tempted to throttle him then and there and accuse him of the crime and of having involved this girl in it.

Wayne restrained himself with an effort. "I cannot yet prove it. I must dig deeper and unearth the motive. Besides—what of her? What of her?" he asked himself, looking as drawn and white in the dim light as if the burden of crime was on his own shoulders.

CHAPTER VII.

CONVERGING FORCES.

ANDY DILLON walked home briskly that evening. He was very elated. He felt sure that Ora Gordon would finally submit to his contemplated extortion. He already was calculating in how far he could fleece her.

Dillon found his home unoccupied. His two maiden sisters were at a church fair. He lighted the library and drew the curtains carefully, then opened his desk and unlocked a tin box, from which he took a small package of folded documents. He glanced at a clock on the fireplace mantel, then sat down and poked the dying embers on the hearthstone into flames.

"Nearly eight o'clock," he muttered. "It's time they went up in smoke. Burned bridges cannot be crossed."

Dillon opened one of the documents and glanced grimly at it, then thrust it into the fire. It burned quickly. A strong draft seized the charred paper and carried it swiftly up the broad chimney. Another followed, then a third and fourth. The fifth had a red smear on it. Dillon saw it and sneered, then tossed it after the others. The last he consigned to the flames was smaller and narrower. It looked like a certified bank check. He smiled ironically and watched it burn—till he heard a low whistle near the windows.

Dillon arose quickly and went to the

side door, admitting Joe Murray, the caretaker of the links, and the college janitor, Jake Furbush.

"Come in," he said brusquely. "Don't keep me holding the door open. You might be seen. I'm alone here."

"Have you seen the skirt? That's more to the point," Furbush said, as they followed Dillon into the library. He was a slouching, narrow-eyed man and, as he sat down and placed his faded, soft felt hat on his knees, he fixed a lowering gaze on the face of the stockbroker. "Have you seen her?" he repeated.

"Certainly I've seen her," said Dillon. "I told you I would, Furbush, and I always make good."

"That's right, Jake," Murray corroborated. "You can always bank on Mr. Dillon."

"Well, what did she say? Will she come across?"

"I'm to know to-morrow."

"To-morrow, eh? What was the matter with knowing to-night?" he asked impatiently.

"You can't drive a girl of her type," Dillon curtly told him. "She wants to think it over."

"Why didn't you tell her we'd do the thinking for her?" Furbush sullenly questioned. "She's got no choice."

"That's true, Jake, but there would have been nothing gained by forcing the matter," Dillon said firmly. "More flies can be caught with molasses than vinegar."

"Sure!" Murray agreed. "That's right. You leave it to Dillon, Jake, and he'll get the goods. He'll wring the coin out of her."

"There's no question about that in my mind," Dillon assured them. "The girl knows she's in wrong——"

"Sure she's in wrong, Dillon, when I'll go on a witness stand and swear I saw her kill him," Furbush interrupted. "The way I saw her would be enough to convince any jury. Did you tell her that?"

"The equivalent of that," Dillon said dryly. "You leave it to me. She knows her situation is hopeless. All she wants, Jake, is time to consider it."

"Much good that'll do her," Furbush said scornfully.

"I gave her till to-morrow," Dillon continued. "She's to meet me at the old grist mill at sunset. She'll have weakened by that time, take it from me, and I then will dictate my own terms. As Murray said, I'll wring the coin out of her. By the way, Murray, are you sure what Detective Wayne said to her by telephone at the clubhouse this morning?" he asked abruptly.

"Why not?" Murray quickly questioned. "I was listening over the stairs. I heard him speak her name and ask her about loaning her key."

"Anything more?"

"He only told her that Hargrave was murdered."

"Do you know why he left so hurriedly?"

"I don't," Murray admitted. "He didn't say, but he looked a bit upset."

"Suppose he did leave in a hurry," Furbush queried. "What about it?"

"I think he wanted to question the girl," Dillon explained.

"What if he did? She certainly did not weaken, or he would have pulled her in," Furbush argued.

"That's very true," Dillon admitted. "There's no probability that the girl will weaken, Furbush, as far as that goes. All I'm anxious about is what Rodney Wayne may discover or suspect."

"Rats!" Furbush vented a scornful grunt. "If he gets too wise, Dillon, or blocks our way in this job, we'll hand him his right off the reel. There's too much at stake to let him queer it. We ought to get a million out of it."

"That's the very point," Dillon told him more gravely. "We must head off

Wayne at any cost. If he learns anything that threatens us, or if he suspects the girl, even, we must—— Wait! She may be calling."

The telephone was ringing. Dillon hastened to answer it, taking the chair at his desk. The two men listened and watched him, Murray expectantly, Furbush with a lowering look of awakened apprehension and suspense. The change that came over Dillon's face was not assuring. His brows contracted and by slow degrees his color faded till he was very pale. His lips tightened when he replaced the receiver.

"It was my stenographer, Mabel Draper," he explained. "She telephoned from New York."

"What about?" Furbush asked suspiciously.

"A stranger who called at my office this afternoon," said Dillon, frowning thoughtfully. "He said his name was Brown, and that he wanted to inquire about some investments. He spoke of Hargrave, however, and Mabel became suspicious, having read of the murder."

"Suspicious of you?" asked Furbush.

"No, no, not that!" Dillon said quickly. "Of the stranger's manner and the fact that he asked about Hargrave's business with me. She thought I ought to know about it, so she telephoned as soon as she could get me. She followed him to the garage where I put my car. He talked with a workman, but she could not hear what was said, and then he examined one of the cars. That's all she could tell me."

"That's enough!" Furbush gruffly declared. "It must have been the detective."

"I don't think so," Murray said quickly. "I saw Wayne going home about noon."

"Could he find out what car you had last night?" Furbush questioned.

"Certainly, as far as that goes," Dillon admitted. "But he cannot prove that I was in this locality. I altered the number plates and wore a disguise. I said in the garage that I was going to Brookville and look at some land I thought of buying. No one can prove that I didn't. I hardly think the man was Rodney Wayne, judging from Mabel's description. Furthermore, if he had learned anything of importance he would have got busy by this time."

"Sure thing!" Murray exclaimed. "Wayne never puts off nailing his man."

"However, we must make dead sure about it," Dillon said decidedly. "I'll drive in to-morrow and see what I can learn. I'll return before noon. In the meantime——" He broke off for a moment and took from the tin box a brown wig and a false beard. "In the meantime, Murray, you find Wayne in the morning and watch him constantly. Having made no move up to this time, he probably will make none to-night, even if he was the man and there is any real cause for alarm. Here's the disguise I wore yesterday. Wear it, if necessary, and don't lose track of him. Report at once any threatening step he may take. I'll be here from noon until sunset."

"I'll do that, Mr. Dillon, all right," Murray eagerly assured him, hastening to take the disguise and put it in his pocket.

"There's nothing in half doing things," Furbush muttered with a display of ugly impatience. "If he's got wise to anything, we must put him out of our way."

"Suppose he follows you to the mill?" Murray suggested inquiringly. "The girl may have told him something."

"Nonsense!" Dillon declared after a moment's thought. "He would not have had to go to town in that case."

"Sure! That's true," Murray quickly allowed. "I figure we're more scared than hurt."

"You keep an eye on him to-morrow, Murray, all the same," Dillon again commanded. "If he should follow me

to the mill, you lie low there and be ready to lend me a hand. That's all there is to it. We can only wait till to-morrow—and we'll leave it that way. Get out, now, before my sisters return."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN TIDES MEET.

DETECTIVE WAYNE was not a man to sacrifice his duty to gratify a personal affection. Dillon's visit to Ora Gordon, their apparently friendly parting, the accumulating evidence against both, the girl's own reticence and conduct since the crime, all constrained Rodney Wayne from confiding in her before finding adequate evidence to prove his increasing suspicions.

Wayne did not stop going, however. He followed Dillon home and saw him enter the house and light the library. Crouching near a hedge in the side grounds, bent upon watching him, he saw him draw down the curtains; and Wayne then lingered briefly only to consider the advisability of an interview with him. He again decided to defer it and was about to go, when a momentary gleam in the gloom directly over the house caught his eyes. It was like the flash of a firefly. It was gone in an instant. Presently he saw another of slightly longer duration, and a gust of wind straight toward him over the house brought a familiar odor.

"Burned paper!" Wayne muttered, gazing up at the dim outline of the chimney discernible against the starry sky. "He has destroyed something, letters or documents, perhaps. The draft is strong enough to waft the burning fragments up the chimney and the wind bears them this way. If I—why, here's a piece of one!"

It fluttered down nearly in front of him, a crumpled scrap of paper half as large as his hand. Wayne picked it up and quickly extinguished the smoldering fire along one edge of it. He drew back to examine it with his searchlight, but stopped abruptly and thrust it into his pocket. Two men were stealthily entering the rear gate.

"Joe Murray and that Furbush fellow!" Wayne quickly recognized them. "Dillon expects them, eh? But how do they fit in with him—and Ora Gordon?" he asked himself in grim perplexity.

Wayne saw Dillon admit them, but he could not hear what was said. Nor by crouching near the library windows could he catch even a word from within. He waited till they departed, and then cautiously followed them until they separated, evidently to go to their homes.

Rodney Wayne also went home and to bed. Other matters too important to be deferred also engaged him part of the following day. It was late in the afternoon when, havingly vainly racked his brain to fathom how Jake Furbush could have become a factor in the mystifying case, he resolved to find out, if by any means he could force him to reveal it. Though he had been to the clubhouse he, for obvious reasons, had not seen Joe Murray, nor would he have recognized him in the bearded man lounging on one of the park seats when he approached the college grounds.

Detective Wayne discovered Furbush, however, just as the latter was entering a gray stone building somewhat apart from the others, where the huge glass dome for astronomical observations loomed up against the blue of a cloudless sky. The detective hastened that way and followed him, and Murray, eyes gleaming, quickly left his seat in the opposite park.

Wayne found the lower corridor deserted. The doors of several adjoining rooms were closed. He listened briefly, heard nothing, inferred rightly that the usual occupants of the building had gone for the day, and then he went up

to the second floor, where he heard footsteps on the one above.

"Furbush!" he murmured. "There's no mistaking his slouching gait."

Wayne stole up quietly, then went up a few steps leading to the open door of the observatory. A flood of light came through the huge dome and the surrounding windows of the broad, circular room. He had no eyes for the large telescope mounted on a standard in the middle of the room, nor for other equipments that ordinarily would have been of interest. He was thinking only of his quarry, and he at first could not discover him.

Presently Wayne heard him in an opposite closet, from which he emerged with a broom and a long feather duster, just as the detective walked into the room.

Furbush stopped and stared at him.

"What d'ye want here?" he asked gruffly, coming nearer. "Visitors ain't allowed."

"Not if one has a permit?" Wayne queried, gazing at him.

"You got one?" Furbush asked incredulously.

"A very effective one," Wayne said dryly. "It's in my hip pocket. Want to see it?"

Furbush hesitated, then grinned. Submission seemed the only safe course. The detective's eyes had a steely light he did not like, and his voice a subtle ring more menacing even than his words.

"I reckon not," Furbush replied, shaking his head. "I'll take a chance it's all right."

"I figured you would," Wayne told him. "Your name's Furbush, isn't it?"

"That's what."

"Janitor here?"

"For nigh two years. There's a class here to-night, star gazers, so I'm going to dust up a bit. Take a look around, if you like."

"That's what I came for." Wayne turned to a window, one between Furbush and the door. Spread out like a vast green cloth half a mile away, nearly every rod of the verdant golf course could be seen quite plainly. "One gets a fine view of the links from here," he remarked.

"Pretty fine." Furbush eyed him furtively. "But I get no time to look round," he added with emphasis that instantly gave Wayne a somewhat startling suspicion.

"That so?" he queried.

"No time at all," Furbush muttered. "I'm always busy."

"You called at the clubhouse yesterday," Wayne pointedly told him. "I saw you talking with Joe Murray."

"I'd heard of the murder," Furbush explained. "I wanted to know about it. I went to ask him."

"More than you already knew about it?" Wayne said. "Is that what you mean?"

"I knew nothing about it," Furbush protested. His voice went gruff again and his frown deepened to a threatening scowl. "How could I know?"

"You had an appointment with Murray the previous evening. I heard him tell the constable."

"What of it? What's that got to do with it?" Furbush demanded. "Couldn't I have a date with Murray without knowing anything about the murder?"

"It might have led to your knowing."

"What d'ye mean by that? What you pumping me for?" Furbush asked resentfully. "I know nothing about it."

Wayne did not reply. He took from a rack near by an ordinary telescope and began to focus it. It was one of several portable glasses with which the observatory was equipped. He wanted to verify the suspicion that had suddenly occurred to him.

Furbush eyed him darkly and edged toward the open door.

"Wait!" Wayne stepped directly in

front of him. "You stand right there," he commanded.

"I guess not!" Furbush shook his head defiantly. "What d'ye mean, stand right here?"

"Just what I say," Wayne replied authoritatively. "I'm not through with you. Stay where you are.'

Furbush drew back a step and waited. Suppressed rage and increasing apprehension distorted his dark features. He glanced toward the door wondering whether Murray was near and would come to aid him.

Detective Wayne briefly ignored him, though he made sure he did not move.

He adjusted the telescope and gazed through it at the golf links. It seemed to bring them to his very feet. He could see as plainly as if he were on the spot the putting green at the tenth hole, even the metal hole rim, also the stones and ruts in the back road, and each tree and shrub in the woodland beyond. His features hardened while he gazed. He replaced the telescope in the rack, then turned deliberately and looked keenly at Furbush.

"What did you see here about this time on Monday evening?" he asked sternly.

"I did not see anything. I wasn't here at this time," Furbush said surlily. but his voice faltered and his swarthy cheeks were turning pale. "I don't know what you mean at all. I didn't see——"

"You lie!" Wayne pointed a threatening finger at him. "You were expecting Murray to come here. You used that telescope to see whether he had left the clubhouse and was coming over the links. You saw, instead, the solitary player in a gray golf suit. You saw what occurred at the tenth hole. You saw Hargrave murdered and you know who killed him," he cried with increasing severity.

"I did not!" Furbush angrily denied it, but his lank, slouching figure was shaking with increasing alarm. "I did not see——"

"Stop!" Wayne commanded angrily. "I know what you have done, Furbush, and why you did it now. You confided in Murray and told him what you had seen. Instead of revealing it, you two rascals planned to blackmail some one, if not the murderer, some person involved in the crime."

"We did not!" Furbush cried. "I know nothing about it."

"Why did you and Murray visit Andy Dillon last night?" Wayne sharply questioned.

"Dillon!" Furbush gasped involuntarily. "How'd you know? We went there to take some golf balls and——"

"Stop!" Wayne shook his fist under the nose of the shrinking janitor. "I'll not stand for any more lies. You' tell me the truth. You tell me just what you saw at the tenth hole. Tell me all you know about this murder! If you don't, Furbush——" Wayne threw off his coat with one fierce movement and seized his cringing hearer by the throat. "If you don't—I'll thrash you within an inch of your life!"

"No you won't! You let him alone, Wayne, and stick up your hands, or I'll pump you full of lead!"

Murray had arrived after a brief search for the couple. With his disguise protruding from his pocket, with his drawn face indicating that he was quite capable of executing his threat, he had stolen into the room and, with his pistol leveled, was crouching scarcely six feet behind the detective.

Rodney Wayne did not obey him. He glanced over his shoulder at him, but his grip on Furbush did not relax. For an instant, as such thoughts strangely come to one at such a moment, he recalled the pale, agonized face of Ora Gordon and the promise he had made her.

"Shoot!" Furbush cried, glaring desperately at his hesitating confederate.

"Kill him, Murray, and end it. He's got wise. We'll not be heard. Fire, you fool, and——"

Wayne did not hesitate. He had paused only to plant his feet firmly on the floor. His teeth met with a sudden ugly snap. As quick as a flash he flung Furbush directly in front of him, so that Murray could not fire without shooting his confederate. Then, as if suddenly endowed with a superhuman strength, and so quickly that neither could prevent it, he pushed Furbush headlong over Murray's crouching form and sent both men sprawling upon the floor.

Only one blow was struck. It fell squarely on Murray's jaw when he scrambled up, pistol in hand, and he fell back on the floor, every muscle quivering, as insensible as if he had been felled with a mallet.

Wayne turned on the instant and sprang upon Furbush, forcing him back on the floor and whipping out a pair of handcuffs, one link of which he snapped around the wrist of the struggling man before he fairly knew it. Wayne then jerked him nearer to Murray and locked their wrists together.

"That'll hold you, I guess," he said as he put Murray's pistol in his own pocket. "Wait till he comes round and I'll soon find out whether you'll tell the truth."

"Oh, it's all off," Furbush sullenly admitted, with a glance at Murray's deathly white face. "You've got us cornered. I'll hand it to you straight."

CHAPTER IX.

UNDER THE SURFACE.

THE sun was setting. Shafts of amber light were elongating the shadows in the woodland when Ora Gordon kept her appointment with Andrew Dillon.

She found him smoking a cigarette. He was seated on a faded old box in a front section of the deserted mill, the broad front door of which had fallen from its rusty hinges. The walls and interior were gray and decayed with age. The huge wooden wheel that once had derived its motive power from the stream near by lay rotting in the sluice where it had fallen.

Dillon arose and sharply eyed the girl when she approached. She was very pale, but very calm. She was dressed in a dark blue walking suit, the color of which accentuated her unusual pallor. She bowed coldly to Dillon when she paused at the broad doorway, and Dillon smiled.

"Not very good quarters, Miss Gordon," he remarked.

"As good as the business that brought me here," Ora told him coldly.

"I am compelled to agree with you," Dillon replied. "But they will serve our purpose. I can offer you only the box on which I was seated."

"Keep it," Ora responded. "I prefer to stand." She stepped into the dismal room, but only over the threshold, and then glanced out toward the lane and woods.

"What are you looking for?" Dillon asked suspiciously, seeing an expectant expression in her eyes.

"Are the two men here who, you said, saw me strike Mr. Hargrave?" she inquired, instead of answering his question.

"No," Dillon said shortly. "They're not coming here. I can settle this business without any help from them. They will be content with any terms I shall make with you."

"There will be no terms, Mr. Dillon." Ora Gordon gazed at him without a change of countenance.

"No terms!" Dillon's jaw sagged. He had felt sure she would yield to his terms. "What do you mean? Haven't you decided what to do?"

"I have," she replied coldly. "I have decided not to submit to any extortion.

I will not buy your silence at any price."

"Do you realize what that means?" Dillon demanded. "Have you considered it carefully?"

"Very carefully. I know to what it will lead."

"I will expose you," Dillon sternly threatened. "It will land you in prison. You will be tried, convicted, sentenced for life, if not——"

"I know." Ora checked him with a gesture. "I now know, too, what devolves on me."

"You do, eh?" Dillon said sneeringly. "I very much doubt it. When did you come to that decision?"

"I came to it, Mr. Dillon, while talking with you last evening," Ora told him. "I made up my mind then and there what I ought to do and what I would do. I decided before you left the house, and I made this appointment with you so that I could inform you under conditions that would insure no miscarriage of justice in any respect."

"What are you saying?" Dillon gasped amazedly. "Do you mean—wait! For what are you looking?" he cried harshly, turning white with suspicion when he saw her glance again toward the woods and lane. "Are you expecting some one? Have you told any one. You said you would not reveal——"

"I have revealed nothing," Ora interrupted.

"But you have something up your sleeve," Dillon angrily accused her. "You wouldn't speak like that, look like that, if you hadn't. Tell me what you mean. I'll not be double crossed. Tell me the truth. If you don't I'll wring it out of you," he threatened fiercely, striding nearer to her and grasping her wrist. "Out with it! What have you done? Why are——" He stopped as if suddenly dumfounded.

A shadow had fallen across the doorway. It was instantly followed by Detective Wayne. He had learned of the rendezvous from Furbush, and while concealed near by he had seen the girl arrive and overheard all that had been said. He strode through the doorway and thrust Dillon back into the room.

"You wait right there, Dillon," Wayne said calmly. "I want a word with you."

"Thank Heaven, Mr. Wayne, that you are here," Ora said fervently. "You must have received my letter requesting it. In case you might not receive it, I also sent one to the constable, asking him to come here about this time with some assistants."

"They're coming now." Wayne pointed.

Constable Bagley, with three men following him, quickly came nearer and paused at the broad doorway, with looks of wonderment on their faces.

"What's it all about?" Dillon asked. "You've only got——"

"Never mind what we've got," Wayne interrupted. "What were you saying, Miss Gordon?" He was surprised at her statement. He had received no letter from her, not having been home since noon.

"I will tell you." Ora steadied herself. She was very pale. "I told you, Detective Wayne, that you are the one man to whom I would appeal if I were in need. I have lied to you. I have been blinded to my duty by the horror of a terrible situation. I could not reason intelligently for a time. I came to myself, however, when that man called on me and tried to blackmail me, and talked of fixing my crime upon another." She pointed to Dillon, but only distress and despair were in her voice. "I wanted you to be convinced of his treachery and—I now give myself up. It was I who killed Richard Hargrave," she confessed, her lips quivering. "It was I who——"

"Wait!" Wayne checked her gently. He wanted to end her piteous distress

as quickly as possible. "I have something to say."

"There's not much to be said," Dillon declared with insolent intonation. "She's telling the truth. I can produce a man who saw her kill Hargrave. I can——"

"You cannot produce him," Wayne interrupted. "He is now in the county jail with Murray, his confederate."

"In jail!" Dillon gasped, staring.

"Exactly." Wayne's voice hardened. He took a disguise from his pocket. "Do you recognize this?" he demanded. "It's the disguise you wore when you drove down here to waylay Richard Hargrave. You would have found some way to carry out your design, Dillon, if habit had not led him this way as you expected."

"Say!" Bagley exclaimed. "What the dickens——"

"You be quiet, Bagley," Wayne interrupted. "Do you recognize this, Mr. Dillon?" He held out a scrap of paper. "It's part of one of the stock certificates you were burning last night. It shows the name of the corporation, also the number and value of the certificate. I have talked by telephone with the treasurer.

"The certificate has been raised from one share to one hundred. No doubt the others were like forgeries," Wayne said accusingly. "You evidently owed Hargrave a large sum of money and gave him forged collateral. He wanted his loan, no doubt, which you could not pay and took desperate means to prevent exposure. I'll get all of the details later," he went on sternly. "There is a smear on this paper, which no doubt will reveal your finger print. The disguise you wore was torn off briefly when you grappled with Hargrave, and the man with a telescope saw your face. He tried with Murray to blackmail you, but you have nothing, and all three of you then conspired to blackmail Ora Gordon, of whose accidental encounter with Hargrave you took advantage of to fix the crime upon her. But Furbush has confessed," Wayne impressively told him. "He saw Hargrave rise from the ground to go on his way, when you ran from the woods, where you had been hiding, and killed him with the club this girl had dropped when she fled. You are the assassin, Dillon. You are the——"

Wayne stopped short. Dillon was staggering toward the door. The detective saw Ora Gordon sway against the wall, nearly fainting, and he turned hurriedly to Bagley.

"Take him away, constable, and lock him up," he said sharply. "Be quick about it. We'll finish this case in the criminal court. Courage, courage, Miss Gordon," he cried. "Let me take you into the open air. Don't fear. The clouds have passed."

She stood gazing at him as if dazed, after he drew her out into the clearing, while Bagley and his companions hurried Dillon away. She found her voice at last.

"Oh, oh," she gasped. "Do you mean that I did not——"

"Kill Hargrave?" Wayne finished. "No, no, you didn't! You only stunned him. I've been trying to find out what it all meant and I've succeeded. I told you I would turn and do everything to help you, Miss Gordon, should you need——"

Wayne stopped. She had swayed nearer to him with a low moan of infinite relief. He put his arms around her.

"Oh, oh, how can I repay you!" she said chokingly.

Rodney Wayne smiled as he drew her nearer.

"Some day, Ora, I'm going to tell you," he said softly.

When Bud Woke Up

by Christopher B. Booth

BEFORE they had become stiffened with rheumatism, "Bud" Freeman's long, slim fingers had been adept in the art of darting into other people's pockets. At the moment they displayed one silver dollar.

"One solitary buck, Sandy," he declared. "How you fixed?"

Sandy Hartigan, who had been surveying the dreary length of the South Clark Street café with vacant-eyed abstraction, looked up glumly. "Two-bits," he replied despondently. "Five measley jitneys."

"Well, I gotta enough fer a coupla shots of hooch—and to-day is th' first of th' month," Bud said cheerfully. "You ain't forgot this is th' first of th' month, have you?"

"No, I ain't forgot," replied Sandy, frisking himself for a fresh fag.

"Then what's eatin' you?" demanded Bud. "Ain't we always collected a coupla hundred iron men on th' first?"

"We have," replied Hartigan.

"You mean——"

"You know blame well what I mean, Bud; we ain't got th' same hold on George Lambert that we had on th' first of last month, an' on th' first of every month for th' last two years."

Bud scoffed complacently. "Dabney bein' dead ain't gonna spoil our game none. How's Lambert gonna know he's kicked off?"

"I've just gotta hunch, Bud," said Sandy mournfully. "I've gotta hunch that Lambert's wise."

"But how could he be wise?"

"I dunno, Bud—I don't know a thing—I just gotta hunch, that's all."

"Bunk!" said Bud. "How's he gonna get wise?"

"He might have had some private detective keepin' his eye on Jack," replied Hartigan. "It was plain that Jack wasn't long for this world. Nearly everybody along Clark Street here knowed Jack. It would be easy enough for him t' find out that Jack had croaked. And, believe me, that Lambert guy isn't th' sort that loosens up for two hundred bears every month unless he's got to. He looks like he was attendin' his father's funeral every time he counts me out those two hundred sheckles. And——"

"Well, get it out," said Bud.

"And," pursued Sandy, "Lambert's mighty sore at me for makin' him dig up. He knows that Dabney didn't have th' nerve; he knows that Dabney would have kept his mouth shut without a cent if it hadn't been for us."

"For you, you mean," corrected Bud.

"Well, for me then," agreed Hartigan. "Of course, Lambert don't know nothin' about you bein' in on th' game. I'm th' only one he's had any dealin's with. Your job's been t' keep Dabney in tow an 'see that he didn't get de-

spondent an' do a Brody off'n th' Rush Street bridge. Yours was th' biggest job of th' two, Bud. You couldn't help it none because Dabney's old engine just quit on him.

"But what I'm gettin' at is that, with Dabney out of th' way, I wouldn't be a lot surprised if this Lambert guy would try t' get me with th' goods—have me sent up for blackmailin'. See?"

"But—but he wouldn't dare!" replied Freeman.

"Oh, is that so?" Hartigan was out of patience with Bud's insistent optimism. "I tell you he's sore at me. And, with Dabney dead, we ain't got a thing on him—not a thing. How could we prove that Lambert bumped off that bird out in Kansas twenty years ago? We couldn't. He was scared as long as Jack Dabney was among th' livin', for Jack seen him shoot th' man. An' he was th' only livin' soul that did see it! Sometimes it was a wonder t' me that Lambert, th' way he loves a dollar, didn't try t' bluff it out before this—stand right up an 'say that Dabney was cracked. It was his conscience—as much conscience as he's got—I reckon.

"He could have got by with it, I suppose—him a rich business man with a couple of hundred thousand dollars and a clean record for ten or twelve years. Who'd believe he was 'Buck' Grigg who robbed a bank and killed a deputy sheriff? No, Bud, he's gonna quit coughin' up when he gets jerry t' th' fact that Dabney ain't still in our midst t' accuse him."

"Whatcha need is a good, stiff drink," declared Bud. Yet he was gravely disturbed. He had come to hold a great respect for Sandy's hunches—those strange, almost uncanny flashes of intuition which often times prove the best of friends to sinister men.

"I sure hope he ain't got wise," sighed Bud; "we sure need th' dough this month. What with payin' fer Jack's funeral an' my rheumatism so bad that I ain't been able t' lift a leather in three weeks, we gotta get hold of some dough. Was you thinkin' of passin' him up?"

Sandy Hartigan flushed in indignation. "When was I ever a quitter?" he demanded. "Of course I ain't gonna pass him up. I'm goin' to his office right now like I always do on th' first on th' month, but—well, I'm playin' 'em safe. Th' law ain't got much use for blackmailers, an'——"

"Huh!" interrupted Freeman defensively. "It ain't no crime t' take th' coin away from George Lambert. How did he get his start in th' manufacturin' business? I'll tell you how he got it—with th' money he got from that Kansas bank robbery twenty years ago, an' half of it belongin' t' poor Jack Dabney, too. Jack gets a ten-year stretch fer it, an' this Lambert never even kicks in a few centuries t' hire him a good mouthpiece."

"That argument sounds good t' you an' me, Bud, but it ain't goin' t' get me nowheres with th' judge an' jury—if they nab me."

"Mebbe we'd better pass it up," said Freeman anxiously. "If there's any chance of——"

"Fergit it," returned Sandy. "Pass up that two hundred when a buck looks as big t' us as a ferris wheel? Nix; I just gonna wear non-skids. Order th' hair tonic, Bud, an' find out whether I'm ridin' a hunch or if it was them liver an' onions what I had for lunch."

II.

Sandy Hartigan's hunch persisted. As he entered George Lambert's private office, a big, plainly furnished room, he experienced the sense of impending danger. George Lambert, head of the thriving Lambert Manufacturing Company, sat at the flat-top desk, congested with many papers. His eyes

were cold and hard, and his lips tight-drawn and cruel.

"I don't need a calendar to tell me when the first of the month rolls around, eh, Hartigan? Always right on the dot, aren't you? You are annoyingly punctual—you leech!"

This was his customary greeting on the occasion of Sandy Hartigan's calls; it had varied hardly a word in eighteen months or more, but to-day Sandy thought that he detected a gleam of triumph in the man's eyes.

"Always beefin', ain't you?" retorted Hartigan. "You make more fuss over a coupla hundred dollars than if I had robbed a bank out in Kansas an' croaked th' guy who was about t' nab me." This reply, too, was according to formula.

Yet Sandy could not rid himself of the feeling that he was dangerously close to the edge of a trap. He glanced about cautiously. The four walls had but two openings; one was the wide front window, high above the street, the other the stout door which led to the outer offices. There were no closets where witnesses could be hidden; Lambert's voice was too low pitched to penetrate the door. He discounted, too, the possibility of a dictaphone; the man's method would be more direct than that.

"You've collected quite a bit of money from me during the last two years," complained Lambert—he always complained before he paid. It was his preface to counting out the money, but Sandy's nerves were tense, his brain alert.

"I gotta have this two hundred," he thought; "I just gotta have it."

Slowly, reluctantly, it seemed, George Lambert reached to the breast pocket of his coat and drew forth the brown wallet which he always carried, and from the prosperous sheaf of currency selected ten twenty-dollar bills.

"There it is—two hundred."

Cautiously Sandy picked up the bills, one by one, his eyes narrowing. His hunch had been right—the bills were marked! But for only a moment did he hesitate. He knew that Lambert's eyes were upon him—as a cat watches a mouse, ready to pounce.

"Right," he nodded with simulated carelessness, folding the bills over once and reaching them to his pocket. "I won't bother you for another month now, Lambert." He turned his back and took two swift strides toward the door. The manufacturer's voice halted him.

"Wait!" Lambert's voice was almost a command, and Sandy Hartigan smiled. There was humor in that smile, a mirth which was lost upon Lambert because Sandy's back was toward him.

"Whatcha want?" demanded Hartigan. Lambert's toe had trod upon the electric push button under the desk, and he no longer made an effort to hide the exultant grin which had been tugging with the corners of his mouth.

"What I want," fenced Lambert, "is to tell you that on the first of next month——"

The office door opened, and in the opening stood Detectives Rand and Phillips of the police department.

"On the first of next month," continued Lambert after a dramatic pause, "you will be in Joliet. Gentlemen, arrest this man on a charge of blackmail; you will find two hundred dollars in marked bills in his inside coat pocket. He just put them there."

Sandy Hartigan drew himself up indignantly as the two detectives reached out for his arms.

"I am perfectly willing to submit to a search," he protested, "but this guy must be stringin' somebody. I ain't got so much as a buck in my kick; honest I ain't."

"No use trying to stall, Hartigan," said Lambert. "I've got the goods on

you. This man," turning to the detectives, "has been blackmailing me for two years. He took advantage of my wife's—er—social position, knowing that anything hinting of scandal would be very unpleasant. Hartigan got hold of a dope fiend by the name of Dabney, who——"

"Yes, we know 'Snowbird' Dabney," said Detective Rand.

"Who," proceeded Lambert complacently, "was fed with dope until he was actually convinced of the truth of a wild yarn, purely this man's fiction, about me—something about me robbing a bank. Now, as a matter of fact, I did once know a man named Dabney; this same fellow, no doubt. Knowing that this poor dope fiend in his drug-demented state would really believe the story and would put me to a lot of trouble and unpleasant publicity, I——"

"You're a liar!" said Sandy Hartigan. "A darn cool liar, too."

"I paid tribute to this man—two hundred a month—in order to save my wife's feelings. Lately he has been trying to boost the figure, and I had already decided to call the bluff, and that determination was made easier when I discovered that Dabney was dead."

"The whole thing's a lie," protested Sandy. "Go on and search me."

"Oh, we'll search you quick enough," said Detective Phillips. "Hold out your arms."

"I saw him put the money in his breast pocket," said Lambert. "The bills are all marked in a heavy blue pencil with the figures '13'—an unlucky number for Hartigan."

Phillips' hand emerged from Sandy's pocket with a number of tattered envelopes, a worn newspaper clipping, and a pawn ticket.

"He must have worked a little hocus-pocus on you, Mr. Lambert; he hasn't got them in that pocket."

"But—but I saw him," exclaimed the manufacturer.

Swiftly the search continued while Sandy Hartigan chuckled.

"I told you," he said, "I ain't even got a cart wheel. Lambert's off his nut. I ain't got none of his money. An' if he says I have he's off his onion."

A careful frisking of Sandy brought forth exactly five buffalo nickels and not one cent more.

"He's ditched it," said Detective Rand. "Look in that waste basket."

"I was sitting right beside the waste basket," said the amazed and puzzled Mr. Lambert; "he couldn't have thrown it there." Nevertheless the wire receptacle for paper was emptied, and its contents sorted.

"He's bound to have it!" insisted Lambert angrily. "He took it, and he hasn't been outside this room; I haven't had my eyes off of him. He's got it, and you've got to find it."

The detectives looked under the desk, they carefully sorted through the pile of papers on the desk, they looked under the rug. Not one bill did they find. Sandy's clothing was subjected to a second scrutiny. The detectives fingered the lining, looked beneath the sweat band of Sandy's faded derby hat.

"You're just wastin' your time," Hartigan told them; "I ain't got it."

"Of course he's got it, and if you two can't find it you're a fine pair of detectives!" declared Lambert in growing alarm.

"Well, suppose you find it yourself," replied Hand, "if you're so all-fired certain he's got it in his clothes. Are you sure you didn't just imagine you gave it to him?"

George Lambert's face became an apoplectic purple. "Are—are you accusing me of——"

"Of course we're not accusing you of anything, Mr. Lambert," placated Detective Phillips. "If you say you gave

it to him, then you did, but—it's darn queer. You plant us outside to grab this bird; you hand him the money; you see him put it in his pocket; you ring the bell, and we bust through the door and nab him—and he ain't got it. I'll say a wizard ain't got a thing on this guy."

"Where'd you stash it, Hartigan?"

"I told you I didn't have it," said Sandy stubbornly.

"I know you said you didn't," said Phillips, "but what would a rich man like Mr. Lambert be trying to frame a poor worm like you for?"

"That's what I want to know," replied Sandy. "Maybe he's still got the money in his own pocket. Eh?"

Detective Rand's eyes lighted with appreciation of this suggestion.

"That's it, Mr. Rand," Sandy exclaimed. "When he saw he was caught he slipped the bills into his own pocket."

"Nonsense!" Lambert almost choked. "He wasn't within five feet of me." Nevertheless he feverishly began turning his pockets inside out. The marked bills were not there.

"I tell you he's got 'em!" declared Lambert frantically. "You're not going to let him get by with it, are you? Take him down to the police station and give him the third degree—make him tell where he put the money!"

"We can't do that," objected Phillips. "Of course, if we found the marked bills on him——"

"But he's got 'em; I gave 'em to him!"

"But he hasn't got 'em," retorted Rand with growing heat. "We've searched him; we've searched every foot of this office. They're not here, that's all."

"Do you mean to intimate——"

"I intimate nothing," replied Rand tartly. "I merely make the plain statement of fact that the money isn't in this office."

"But—but it is," protested Lambert weakly. "It's—it's got to be."

"Then find it," retorted Phillips.

Lambert shook his head hopelessly. "I—I must be losing my mind. I'll swear——"

The disgusted expression on the faces of the two detectives showed that they thoroughly agreed with Lambert's statement.

"We might as well be going, Bob," said Phillips.

"Aren't you going to arrest him?" asked Lambert.

"Not on your life!" said Rand emphatically. "Not on this sort of evidence. How do you think you could convict a man on evidence like that?"

"Well, I guess I'll be going, too, unless you want to search me again," said Sandy Hartigan obligingly. His sarcasm was not lost on Lambert, who glared helplessly.

"Oh, don't be in a hurry," replied Rand cautiously. "We'll let you trail along with us a little way—just to make sure that you're not slipping one over on us. Darn queer business, that's what it is."

The three went down the elevator together, the detectives and the suspect. The two headquarters men were still perplexed. They hardly dared to doubt the word of the rich Mr. Lambert, yet how could they believe him?

Phillips eyed Sandy suspiciously. "Hartigan," he said, "if you stashed that money, you're wasting your time blackmailing—you ought to be a sleight-of-hand performer."

At the corner they parted, Sandy's lips puckered into a cheerful whistle as he made his way toward The Loop. Rand and Phillips watched him.

"Say," said Phillips, touching Rand on the sleeve, "I don't like the grin he's wearing; I think I'll wait around here. One thing is sure, he ain't got the money on him, and, if he did stash it

back there in Lambert's office, he'll come back after it. See?"

But Sandy Hartigan had no intention of returning to the offices of the Lambert Manufacturing Company. He had set foot inside them for the last time. His fingers toying idly with the five buffalo nickels in his trousers pocket, he seemed in a very cheerful frame of mind for a man who has failed to get the two hundred dollars which he needed desperately. He made sure that he was not being followed and then made his way to the Clark Street rendezvous where Bud Freeman was waiting for him.

Bud had evidently stabilized his credit with the hard-boiled bartender, for he was in the act of swallowing a drink. Bud's eyes rested for a moment on Sandy's face, and his cloud of gloom was dissipated by a proud smile.

"You seen him, huh? Everything was all right, eh? I knowed you was ridin' a bum hunch."

"Everything was not all right," answered Sandy. "Lambert was wise, just like I had th' hunch."

"Then—then you ain't got th' two hundred bucks?" asked Bud in panic. "Gosh! An' I stuck up th' joint here fer a coupla snorts of redeye, I was that sure you'd drift back with th' coin."

"No, I ain't got th' two hundred," said Sandy. "I'm lucky that I ain't in th' hold-over, sendin' out an S O S for a bondsman."

"You're kiddin' me," replied Bud. "You wouldn't be wearin' a grin like that on your mug if you hadn't got your fins on th' dough."

"I've got it an' I ain't," explained Sandy, as, with a mind for the dramatic suspense, he told Bud what had happened.

Bud listened with bulging eyes. "Gosh!" he exclaimed. "So th' dicks walked right in on you, huh? An'—an' your kick was empty? Sandy, how didya do it? An'—an' you say we're still gonna get that kale? Spiel, Sandy, spiel!"

Sandy shoved his thumbs into the arm holes of his vest and expanded with pardonable conceit.

"Bud," he explained, "my hunch an' my noodle was sure doin' good team work to-day. I knowed somehows that Lambert was gonna try an' land me—them hunches of mine generally pans out pretty good. I knowed that he was sore at me for makin' him come across. Then, when I blows into th' Lambert buildin' 'long about noon, I sees Rand and Phillips, a coupla fly cops, hangin' around th' entrance. Th' old hunch tells me that they're waitin' for yours truly t' wander in.

"I almost got cold feet, an', if we hadn't needed that dough so bad, I reckon I'd have quit then an' there. Of course, th' hunch might be wrong, I tells myself; mebbe them fly cops was layin' for somebody else. So I decides to go ahead—slow an' careful.

"I wasn't thinkin' about th' time particular, but it was durin' th' lunch hour when I hits th' diggin's. Lambert was out feedin' his face, an' so was the pretty little steno what tickles th' keys of th' print mill in th' big office, just outside th' big squeeze's sanctum. There was her desk all open, an' th' typewriter just like she left it when th' chow bell rung—there was an envelope that she'd started addressin'. She'd only got as far as 'Mr.' Then th' noodle starts doin' its duty, Bud, an' I get th' big idea. Y' know, I kinda figgers it out that Lambert was gonna slip me some marked money—that's old, y'know.

"Well, anyhow, I gives a slant around th' office an', except for an old Father Time over in th' corner, there ain't a soul around. So I starts playin' with that typewriter, an', although I ain't got no diploma from no night

school in stenography, I don't make such a bum job of it. I likes my first effort at typin' so blame well that I sticks it in my pocket for a sort of souvenir. See?"

It was evident that Bud didn't see at all; he shook his head.

"In about twenty minutes," went on Sandy, "old Lambert comes in, an' in I walks, just like a fly walkin' into a spider web—not! I sees that he's got an ace up his sleeve, but so have I.

"If I hadn't been suspicious, like as not I'd never have noticed them marks on th' money, but, y'see, I was suspicious, an' I seen 'em. But I was all set. I makes out like I was stickin' th' money in my pocket an' I puts it in that envelope. I just wets my thumb and runs it along th' flap, an' it's sealed. My back's turned t' Lambert, see, so I just slips that there envelope among a lot of other unstamped ones in a wire basket what's marked 'Outgoing Mail.' They looks and looks all over th' office for th' two hundred, never thinkin' it's right there in one of them there envelopes. Ain't bad, eh, Bud?"

Bud Freeman groaned. "An' some gink's gonna find himself about two hundred bucks richer after th' postman's whistle blows to-morrow mornin'," he said mournfully.

Sandy sighed at his pal's density. "Wake up, Bud, wake up," he told his pal. "If you'll waltz down t' general delivery late this afternoon th' chances are you'll get some mail. Why, you thick-head, that envelope was addressed t' you!"

NOTORIOUS BANDIT KILLED

WHILE attempting to hold up the People's Bank of Harrison, Arkansas, Henry Starr, chief of the Starr band of outlaws, was shot and mortally wounded recently. Starr and two other men drove up to the bank in an automobile shortly before noon one day. They walked into the bank, drew revolvers, and ordered all the officers and employees to go into the big vault at the rear of the room. At that moment W. I. Meyers, one of the biggest stockholders of the bank, entered. He, too, was ordered into the vault and obeyed Starr's command with alacrity. Long ago Meyers had hidden a loaded rifle in the vault. He found it quickly and began to fire. Starr, who was standing at the entrance to the vault, was hit below the heart with the first bullet and fell to the floor. Dismayed by the unexpected resistance of their victims, and by the wounding of their leader, Starr's confederates rushed from the bank. They drove out of town for a mile, set fire to their machine, and abandoned it, escaping on foot into the near-by hills.

Starr's band of outlaws terrorized Oklahoma for many years. The leader was born at Fort Gibson, in 1873; he was the son of a Cherokee Indian and a woman who had part Indian ancestry. Other members of his family, both men and women, were bandits; his gang "shot up" towns, robbed banks, and held up trains. In 1902, Starr was pardoned after serving time for the murder of Deputy Marshal Wilson in the Pryor Creek train robbery. Then for some years he went straight, but in 1908 he robbed a bank in Amity, Colorado. For this crime he was sentenced to from seven to twenty-five years in the Colorado State prison, but good conduct won parole for him.

One day in March, 1915, Starr and his men rode into Stroud, Oklahoma, tied their horses to the stockyards fence, and proceeded to the two banks in the town and held them up. They got about five thousand dollars and were escaping when Paul Curry, a fifteen-year-old boy, got a gun and shot Starr in the leg, shattering the bone and bringing about the bandit chief's capture.

Starr died a few days after the holdup of the bank at Harrison.

World-famous Robberies

by John Laurence

I. The Robbery of the Gainsborough Duchess

IN May, 1876, all fashionable London was flocking to the New Bond Street to see the marvelous picture of the "Duchess of Devonshire," by the famous master Gainsborough. Messrs. Agnew, the well-known art dealers, had bought the picture for what was then the enormous sum of fifty-two thousand five hundred dollars, and the very price attracted people to see it. It was intended to exhibit it for some weeks before offering it for sale to some wealthy collector who was prepared to pay heavily for the privilege of being its proud possessor.

The picture was carefully guarded all night long by a watchman who was on duty, and to remove the picture with its massive gilt frame would have taken three or four men and a small van, so that little real fear was felt by the owners that it would ever leave their possession save legitimately.

One day two men strolling up New Bond Street talking in low tones to one another found themselves in the middle of the fashionable throng moving in and out of the extrance to the art gallery. They were dressed expensively and in the height of fashion. One of them, indeed, Harry Raymond, had a flat in Jermyn Street, one of the most exclusive quarters in London.

"Ah, this is where they are showing that picture of the 'Duchess of Devonshire,'" he said to his companion. "Let's forget our pal, Tom, for a few minutes and have a look at it, Jack."

"I don't want to look at a picture," replied the other. "That can't help us."

"You never know whom we shall see inside," whispered the other. "It's in places like this I pick up my ideas. Come along."

The two strolled inside and jostled elbows with the élite. Though there were many pictures in the gallery, interest centered on the "Duchess of Devonshire," and the two stood looking at it for a moment listening to the whispered comments of those around them. Suddenly Raymond turned to his companion.

"Quick, come out, I've got an idea," he said in a low tone. "We'll get Tom Warren out yet."

Harry Raymond, one of the biggest organizers of crime the world has ever known, hurried to his magnificent flat in Jermyn Street followed by the companion, Jack Phillips, one of his leading assistants. The two when they had casually turned into the art gallery in New Bond Street, had been discussing the fate of one of their companions, Tom Warren, who had been captured by the police on a charge of forgery.

Both had been planning how they could effect their fellow criminal's escape from the clutches of the law, but without success.

"I've got the idea!" said Raymond, as soon as they were back in his flat. "We'll steal that picture!"

"How's that going to help, Warren?" asked Phillips.

"We'll make the Agnews go bail for him," answered Raymond. "They're respectable enough, and if they're given the hint they can get their precious picture back if Tom Warren is released, the trick's done."

"It's a mad idea," returned Phillips. "Even you can't steal a picture that wants a van to shift it. You can bet it's guarded tight enough. I noticed the doors when we went in, and when they're locked it will take you all your time to open them. Besides, how are the Agnews going to go bail even if you get the picture?"

"Oh, that will be easy enough. They'll just be told he's the only man who can say where the picture is, and we can easily prove that we've got the picture by cutting a bit off it and letting them have it," laughed Raymond. "We can't sell it. It's too well known."

"I suppose the idea is for Warren to skip his bail?" said his fellow criminal.

"What a head!" answered Raymond. "You're coming on. Now you run away for a bit and let me think how I can get hold of it."

Harry Raymond, the master criminal, and a man who counted his income by the thousands was too well known to the police to stand surety for his fellow criminal, Warren, who had been caught carrying out a scheme of the master mind. Though, however, the police were well aware that Raymond was behind many of the big robberies and other crimes in London and elsewhere at the time, they were never able to collect sufficient evidence to convict him, though occasionally they captured one of his subordinates. The organizer of crime, however, never let down his subordinates and he always was prepared to spend money like water in their defense.

He had got it into his head that if he could get hold of the picture which was the center of attraction in London, he could get his fellow criminal released. It was a mad idea, and it resulted in one of the most remarkable robberies of modern times, a robbery extremely simple in its actual carrying out, yet one which baffled the police of England and America for twenty-five years.

The next day Raymond made a careful study of the actual position of the picture as well as the room in which it was, and he further made discreet inquiries about the caretaker.

He dismissed the door as being hopeless to force with a caretaker on the premises who would hear any sound. The caretaker's rooms were some distance away from the room in which the picture was hanging, so that if any one got in the room quietly there was little chance of being disturbed if they kept quiet.

"The only chance is the window, Jack," said Raymond to his subordinate, Phillips. "It's about eight feet from the ground and looks out on a side street. You'll have to act as a ladder while I climb up on you and force the window. We shall have to have another man to be on the look out for cops. Who do you think?"

"Elliot's a safe man," replied Phillips. "He'd better come in on it I think."

"Well, the nights have been a bit foggy lately," said Raymond. "We'll have a shot at it the first night the fog thickens up. You and Elliot had better come round here every night till it comes off. It's only a minute's walk from here. The picture's on show for some weeks so we needn't hurry on that

score, and Warren doesn't come up for trial for a month at least."

For several nights in succession the three waited patiently in the luxurious flat in Jermyn Street, and on May 15th Raymond's hope of a real foggy night was fulfilled. A thick, real pea-soup fog settled on London that night.

"This is all right," said Raymond, looking out of his windows. "You can't see across the road. We'll leave it as late as we can. We'll start about half past two."

Just as Big Ben boomed out three o'clock Raymond and Phillips crept down the side street by the art gallery, leaving Elliot on guard to warn them of the approach of any policeman. Phillips was a very powerfully built man, while his leader, though small, was as active as a cat. Using his companion's hand as a stepladder he was on his shoulders, and then on the window sill. The pressure of a fine jimmy, a sharp crack as the window fastening broke, and the master criminal was raising the sash of the window and stepping cautiously into the gallery.

The famous masterpiece in its massive gold frame hung about five feet from the ground. Raymond had previously decided that it was useless to take the picture as it stood and his plan was to cut it bodily from its frame by means of a sharp knife. Quietly and quickly, his ears strained for every sound, he pulled a small table under the painting and in a moment the only sound was that of his keen knife as it cut through the canvas.

At the bottom of the picture the master thief cut the canvas in a zigzag fashion. He did this purposely, because he intended to send a small scrap of the picture back to the Agnews when the time was ripe. This small scrap would be the zigzag edge and the fact that it would fit would be proof that he possessed the missing masterpiece.

In the light of his dark lantern the thief, himself an expert judge of paintings, rolled up the famous Gainsborough, tied it round with string, and passed it through the half-open window to Phillips.

"All clear?" he whispered.

"O. K.," came the quiet reply.

On the shoulders of his human stepladder Raymond stepped, slid to the ground, and a few minutes later all three were inside the Jermyn Street flat with the precious picture which Raymond locked away.

"We'll get some sleep now," he said. "We shall be in the thick of it to-morrow."

Long before the three criminals were up the whole of London was ringing with the news of the amazing exploit. The theft was so unexpected and mysterious that it provided the chief news in the papers for weeks.

The famous art dealers immediately offered a reward of about five thousand dollars for the recovery of the stolen masterpiece, a reward afterward increased to fifteen thousand dollars, and within a few hours a detailed description of the picture had been telegraphed all over the world, while hundreds of photographs of it were distributed in order to make the sale of it practically impossible. The art dealers, as well as the police, were puzzled over the theft, for it was clear that it could not be realized upon. It was not like jewels, which could be removed from their settings and so disguised, a picture like that was known to every art dealer in the world.

Naturally, however, at the time, the Agnews, nor any one else, except the three men concerned, had the slightest idea what was the real motive of the robbery. And here comes the irony of the whole affair. Tom Warren was released just after the robbery on a technical point of law, and the risk the three criminals had run was all to no purpose.

But now Harry Raymond found himself saddled with a world's masterpiece which was to prove a white elephant to him. Though he was perfectly willing to return the picture anonymously, his companions were not. They had made up their minds if the picture was returned it was only on the condition that the Agnews paid them the fifteen-thousand-dollar reward they had offered.

"Well, I'm not going to run the risk of imprisonment for a paltry sum of fifteen thousand dollars," said Raymond. "And the picture stays in my possession. If I get hard up I'll think about it, but not till then."

Though his companions protested, their chief refused to be moved. He inclosed the picture in a canvas cover, placed it in a special box, and put it in charge of a London storehouse, where for ten years it lay unsuspected by any one, though the keenest brains at Scotland Yard were diligently searching for the robbers.

As a matter of fact many of the famous Scotland Yard detectives, men like Inspector Froest, Inspector Meiklejohn, and others had already suspected that Raymond was concerned in the theft. He was easily the most daring criminal of the time, and the only man, as will be seen later, who was known to have the organization and to be sufficiently clever to dispose of the masterpiece if it were in any way possible. But they were never able to get beyond suspicion, and they were perfectly well aware that a reward of fifteen thousand dollars was not enough to tempt a man of Raymond's wealth.

That picture became a nightmare to the master mind. He felt afraid to return it, though he was in constant terror while it remained in his possession. Luckily he was too much of an art lover to want to destroy it. Moreover he found himself up against another factor, and that was Phillips, the man who had acted as a ladder to him.

"If you ain't going to send that back, Harry," he said a few weeks after the robbery, "I think you owe me my share of the reward. You've got plenty of money and you can afford to pay."

"That's fair enough," replied Raymond. "The reward's fifteen thousand dollars, so your share's five thousand."

He gave his fellow crook that amount and thought he had done with him. But Phillips took advantage of his knowledge and blackmailed the master criminal steadily. Four years after the theft Raymond fled to New York, leaving the precious picture still in storage in London. From New York he went to Chicago and shortly afterward doubled back to London. He was in a mortal fear that Phillips would sooner or later give him away. For a year or so in England, Raymond managed to shake off his ungrateful and treacherous crook, but in 1886, ten years after the crime had been committed, he was once more being blackmailed.

"I wish the devil I'd never seen you," Raymond cried angrily. "And this is the last money you'll ever get from me. I'm clearing out of England for good and you can do your worst."

Raymond was getting hard up then, and he would have been only too glad to lay his hands on the reward which the Agnews had not withdrawn, though ten years had passed. When Phillips had left him he went for a stroll down Piccadilly to think things over, and as luck would have it he ran into Inspector Mieklejohn of Scotland Yard, whom he knew well.

"Hullo, John," he cried. "Come and have a drink with me. I want to have a talk with you."

A good detective never misses the opportunity for a friendly chat with a criminal, and Meiklejohn was soon sitting in the saloon bar of one of the public houses near Piccadilly.

"Let me see, you were the detective

in charge of the Duchess of Devonshire case," said the master criminal quietly.

"That's true," replied the detective. "And I always suspected you, Harry."

"Well, perhaps you were right and perhaps not," answered Raymond cautiously. "At any rate I'll tell you this, if the Agnews want that cursed picture back they can have it if they'll pay over the fifteen thousand."

"Can you put your hand on the picture?"

"Yes, if the reward will be paid to me," replied Raymond. "You had better see Sir George Lewis, and if you're successful I'll give you twenty-five hundred for yourself."

But Sir George Lewis, to whom the Agnews had given complete control should the picture be recovered, now refused to pay more than five thousand dollars for the return of the masterpiece, and Raymond determined to take it to America and see if he could find a higher purchaser there. For several years, exactly as in London, the picture was stored in Brooklyn. The thief wandered from country to country, afraid to destroy it, unable to sell it, and cursing the day he ever stole it.

Years passed by, and though Scotland Yard knew the thief they were unable to act, and the return of the picture was as romantic as its theft had been puzzling. Long before it was returned a gambler named Pat Sheedy, playing roulette in Condini's, in Chicago, staggered out of the building a ruined man.

A stranger who had been winning all night came up to him and gave him one thousand dollars in notes.

"Here, this will help to put you on your feet again," he said.

"I can't take it," replied Sheedy. "I don't know you."

"That's all right," replied the other. "I know you, Pat Sheedy. I shall get it back some day."

Pat Sheedy forgot all about the generous stranger till one day in Constantinople when he received a mysterious scrap of paper with just three words on it, "Condini's—Chicago—$1,000."

That was enough to bring back that night years ago when he was broke and he promptly made inquiries. He found to his astonishment that the stranger, who was no other than Harry Raymond, had been practicing his criminal arts in Constantinople and had found himself inside a Turkish prison. By some mysterious means he had found out that Pat Sheedy was staying in the city and had taken this way of appealing for his assistance.

Sheedy knew the Turks well and he had no difficulty in bribing the prison officials to release the unknown stranger.

"Who are you?" Sheedy asked. "You helped me years ago when I was broke away back in Chicago and now you turn up again years after without any warning in Constantinople."

"My name's Harry Raymond," replied the other. "And I'm broke. I need money badly. Do you know anything about pictures?"

"A little," replied Sheedy.

"Did you ever hear of the 'Duchess of Devonshire,' painted by Gainsborough?"

"What, the one that was stolen years ago in London?"

"Yes, I stole it," replied Raymond. "And if you care to return it to the Agnews and give me a share of the money I shall be glad."

The astounded Sheedy heard then the whole of the story from Raymond's lips. In 1901, twenty-five years after it had been stolen, he handed over the wonderful canvas to Mr. Agnew, who afterward sold it to the late Pierpont Morgan for one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars.

As I have hinted Harry Raymond was a natural leader of men and he had a sharp eye for able assistants in the gangs of thieves he managed to collect

around him. He lived like a prince in London and Paris, owned several race horses and kept a gorgeous steam yacht with a crew of twenty men. He lived in a luxuriously furnished flat in Jermyn Street, containing works of art worth many thousands of pounds. He had besides a fine villa in St. John's Wood, a house which was inclosed in spacious high-walled grounds, and his horses and carriages were the envy of the neighborhood.

His yacht, which he had to sell when he fell on bad times, was a well equipped one. To give an example, Raymond once attempted to loot a warehouse in the docks at Kingston, Jamaica. He was chased by a British gunboat, but he managed to escape on account of the remarkable speed of his yacht. In those days the prince of criminals was making between one hundred thousand and one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year.

"Harry Raymond," said Inspector Byrnes, the famous chief of the New York police, "was for many years the organizer of huge robberies. He managed to carry them out so skillfully that it always proved impossible to prove his complicity in a court of law. In my opinion he was the biggest criminal of his day."

His first big robbery was twenty thouand dollars from a bank in Massachusetts, and his next the great Boylston bank robbery, when over one million dollars were stolen, and Raymond managed to get to London with the greater part of the spoil. In London he planned a series of fresh robberies, taking no actual part himself, and in many towns on the continent his subordinates successfully carried out robberies which he had engineered.

After the robbery of the famous "Duchess of Devonshire," a robbery which brought him nothing compared with the hundreds of thousands he had made out of thefts, though his name will always be associated with it, he went to South Africa, where he managed to get away with over a million dollars' worth of diamonds which he stole from the mails.

Once, and once only, was he convicted. He met his Waterloo in Belgium, where, through the carelessness of one of his associates, he was arrested while attempting a big robbery and sentenced to seven years imprisonment. He came out a broken man.

He was the brain at the back of many big coups in Europe; he defrauded the public of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and he managed in a remarkable way to keep clear of all the traps laid for him by the police.

To his headquarters in London came the cleverest thieves of every nation. They sought his advice, carried out his orders, and shared with him the profits of their enterprises. Crimes in every quarter of the globe were planned in his luxurious home, and there often the final division of booty was made.

Yet after his first and only imprisonment in Belgium he went to pieces. It broke him completely. In 1903, one cold March day, a company of three mourners watched his coffin lowered into a grave in Highgate Cemetery, London. At one time nearly a millionaire he died in the most abject poverty.

NEW YORK POLICE INSPECTOR GENERAL

A NEW office, that of inspector general, was created recently in the New York police department. Acting Inspector William T. Davis has been appointed to the position. His duties will be to make inspections of police department equipment, including the uniforms of officers, and to see to its repair. He is assigned to the chief inspector's office at police headquarters.

Going Down

by Frederick Ames Coates

Author of "The Failure," etc.

THE more Harry Wells allowed his mind to dwell on it, the more he regretted having sent that telegram. Of course, he and George Brainerd—"Georgie Porgie," he had been affectionately called—had been the closest of chums throughout their college days: roommates, members of the same fraternity, and more. It was one of those friendships that seem at the time to be of the undying variety, but which too often melt rapidly away under the disintegrating influences of physical separation and diverse interests. Why, it must be actually eight years or more since he had seen or communicated with old Georgie. What he was doing, how he was prospering—these things he knew nothing about. Nor would he have had the slightest idea of his old friend's whereabouts had he not received through the mail, on the day before starting his business trip, an Alumni Address List issued by the college. In glancing through it he had happened upon the information that George Brainerd was living in a suburb of Boston.

Boston! And Wells himself had been engaged for years in the paper business in New York, a scant two hundred and fifty miles away—had made, in fact, frequent trips to the New England metropolis. To think that Georgie had been there all the time, and that they had never met! It was this, no doubt, which had stirred up again the old feeling of comradeship and had prompted him to telegraph Brainerd that he was coming, and that he would be glad to have a visit with him if convenient. "Practically invited myself to be his guest!" thought Wells whimsically as the train passed the Commonwealth Armory and began to slow down for its stop at the Back Bay station.

Probably, though, Georgie would not meet him. There had been no answer to the impulsive telegram—it hardly had allowed time for one. Now that he came to think of it, he had heard remarkably little about his one-time roommate—even at the occasional gatherings of his college clan which he had attended in New York. Brainerd seemed to have sunk out of sight, as those men have a habit of doing who do not get on well in life. Poor old Georgie! The phrase seemed so natural, so familiar, that Henry Wells analyzed his thought. It seemed he had heard Brainerd referred to with just that adjective, and with the inflection of voice that tells as much as many words could do. It meant, no doubt, that Georgie was one of the failures of life; that he had sunk through that invisible crust—composed mainly of hopes, to be sure—which college lads fondly imagine bears them up on a higher lever than their less fortunate fellows. That being the case, there was slight chance that Brainerd would have heeded the telegram. Wells picked up his bags, ignored the obsequious redcap who approached him, and made his way to the upper level of the station.

As he was about to pass out into the street, a hand on his shoulder detained him. "I beg your pardon! Isn't this —— Why, hello, Harry!"

Dropping his bags, Wells wheeled about. "Georgie!" he cried, thrusting out a hand. "You got my telegram, then."

He noted with glad approval the appearance of the other, which was far from being as his forebodings had pictured. Surely there was nothing shabby about the perfect fit and the jaunty dignity of the gray cutaway suit, which, moreover, lacked the blatant newness that might have indicated it had been assumed for the occasion. As for the man himself, Brainerd possessed the same wiry slimness he had had years before; on his mobile features now was the same radiant grin that Wells had known so well in the old days. Not much change, and such as there was could be attributed to the encroachments of middle age. The cheeks a bit sunken; those worn lines about the eyes —were the eyes themselves a little less direct in their gaze?

"It's surely good to see you, old scout!" said Brainerd. "Except that you look like a regular captain of industry now, you haven't changed much."

"It was pretty crusty of me to telegraph you that way, though," Wells apologized. "I don't know now that you'd better just come and have dinner with me somewhere——"

"Not a bit of it!" protested George. "I've got my flivver parked outside here, in Dartmouth Street, and I'm going to take you home with me. How long can you stop?"

"Oh, a day, perhaps. I've got to chase up to some paper mills in Maine. I just happened to think of your being here, and——"

"I'm glad you did," said Brainerd, cranking his car. "Wait just a minute, old chap; there's a boy with the latest papers—the stock closing, you know." He beckoned the lad and secured a copy. He opened to the market page and glanced it over before starting.

"You interested in the market?" asked Wells.

"Oh—everybody's interested in the market, more or less." The smile that accompanied the words seemed a little forced.

"No bad news, I hope?" ventured Wells.

"Just so-so. If everybody always won there wouldn't be any market, you know. You're familiar with Boston? But of course you are! I won't lecture to you, then, about the points of interest. Ever driven out through the Fenway?"

"No," confessed Wells.

"That's the way we're going," stated George. "Out to Massabit—the finest, most up-to-date, fastest-growing community within the city limits!"

Harry Wells smiled. "You're the same old George, all right! Enthusiastic, visionary——"

"Wait and see if I'm visionary," retorted Brainerd, deftly piloting the car up Huntington Avenue. "By the way, you're married, of course?"

Wells shook his head. "Been too darned busy to get married."

"That's the boy! No wonder you're a rising young millionaire, then. I'm married, of course. Got a little house out here. I told Molly you were coming; she'll be glad to see you. Molly was—— Hey, there! What you doing?" A loaded truck had narrowly escaped a collision with the little car.

"Some of these drivers ought not to be allowed to have a dog license!" declared George Brainerd. "By the way, your line is—what, did you say?"

"Paper—wholesale paper. Doing fairly well, too. What's yours?"

Brainerd waved his free hand in a gesture. "Real estate! The greatest little game in the world! If I were only alone now—— These women don't know how to take chances, you see. And household expenses—more or less of a drag, when you want to mobil-

ize your resources quickly for some deal. Still, I can't complain, I suppose."

Real estate! Just as might have been expected. A business that gave free rein to large fancies, that offered ever-elusive hopes of big profits from small stakes—or none, in the case of a mere brokerage business. Something to give free rein to the easy enthusiasm and the convincing word-painting which had characterized George Brainerd even as a youngster. Nothing humdrum or routine could ever have claimed or kept his attention.

Throughout the drive out to Massabit Square, Brainerd chatted incessantly of one thing after another, never remaining long on a single topic. That, too, was a trait which had characterized him in the old days, though it had evidently grown upon him a great deal. And it served to lull any thoughts which might have begun to rise in Harry Wells' mind concerning the quickness with which the other had switched from the topic of his wife—and earlier from the subject of the stock market.

It was dusk when the little car turned into a narrow driveway beside a six-room frame house on a tree-shaded street.

"Home we are!" said Brainerd cheerily. "I'll show you your room, so that you can change before dinner if you want." They went in at the front door, and George, snapping on the lights, piloted his guest to a rather small, neat chamber on the second floor. "I'm going out to run the car into the garage," he said. "Come down when you're ready, and we'll have a smoke together."

"But—Mrs. Brainerd?" asked Wells, wondering at the failure to introduce him to her.

"Oh, she's not home yet," answered George with a note of nervous embarrassment. "Fact is, old man, she—she works. I don't want her to, but—— Well, you know how women are. Or, rather, you don't. She—she claims she wants extra money for clothes, though —— Well, I won't say any more." He slipped quickly from the room, leaving Wells wondering.

Harry Wells took off his travel-wrinkled suit and hung it up carefully. Then, transferring some money to the change pocket of his inner clothes, he finished his toilet and went to the lower floor.

George Brainerd was already there, hands in pockets, pacing up and down nervously. He was very silent, by comparison with his garrulity on the homeward drive. The sense of embarrassment which had never wholly left Wells returned now stronger than ever. It was becoming evident that Georgie was not entirely contented with his home life—with his wife, to be exact. For he had practically said as much. And if there was one thing that Harry Wells would have shunned it was being a spectator to the domestic troubles of another. Why hadn't George had sense enough to prevent the visit? He could have done so without giving an inkling of the truth; he would only have needed to fail to meet Wells at the station. But for that matter, why had he himself been so softly sentimental as to send that telegram?

He was rather furtively glancing about the comfortably furnished but slightly shabby living room, encroaching upon the strained silence by an occasional half-hearted remark, when he heard steps on the front porch. He rose to his feet as George went into the hall.

"Harry—Mr. Wells—is here, Molly," he said. A moment later the two entered the living room.

"So this is the famous Mr. Wells!" cried the woman. "My! George has been telling me all about you. Glad to have you in our humble home, I'm sure." She proffered a hand, which

Wells took embarrassedly, mumbling his pleasure.

"You'll have to excuse me now, though, while I go out and hustle the supper. I guess George has probably told you that our maid is on a vacation!" She giggled and departed. Harry Wells stole a glance at Brainerd, whose face was a study in patient, painful martyrdom.

"Molly's nothing if not unconventional," he remarked apologetically. "But she's a good girl, after all; yes, a good girl."

Wells said nothing. Already he was trying, with instinctive politeness, not to wonder how George had come to marry a woman like that. George Brainerd, with his keen wit, his fine ideas of taste, his rather pretentious superiority! His very brief glimpse of Mrs. Brainerd had brought to Wells' mind the adjective "dowdy"—applicable to her character as well as to her appearance.

But if it had been possible under any circumstances to conceal his embarrassment at being a self-invited spectator to scenes he would rather not have witnessed, George's obviously apologetic air removed the possibility. It seemed almost as if Brainerd were displaying his infelicity, calling upon his old friend to witness the consequences of his unfortunate marriage. A whole evening of this—for it would be impossible to back out now before morning without making matters worse.

At the table, the conversation was kept alive only by the gay efforts of George's wife, who seemed to sense nothing wrong, and babbled along on every sort of inconsequential topic. Brainerd was moodily, almost rudely silent; and Harry Wells found himself totally deserted by his usual urbanity. He heard with vast relief George's suggestion, voiced as soon as the dessert had been dispatched:

"Let's go out for a smoke and a stroll, Harry. These evenings are too good to waste."

Once away from the house, George Brainerd became more like his normal self. They walked over to the square, which was flanked on one side by a long, low frame building, or rather series of buildings, which, through innumerable remodelings, had been made to house a row of stores on the street level.

"The only blot on our little center," commented George with an airy wave of the hand. "Belongs to an old codger who won't sell except for a ridiculous price, and won't tear down and rebuild. Some day—mark my words—some day some one will come along and give him his price, clear the place off, and put up a modern big building, something worthy of the location. Then he'll sell or rent it to us Massabit people for a million dollars or more—and we'll thank him for doing it! Yes, sir! Thank him." They walked along, Brainerd growing more and more lighthearted as the distance from home increased. "There's room here for a first-class moving-picture theater, one of those palatial affairs. Progress! That's all we need here. As it is, this is our only movie palace." He gestured deprecatingly toward a building, squatty and unimpressive, with flamboyant signboards outside. "They don't put on a bad show, though. Want to drop in?"

"All right," agreed Harry. "How about Mrs. Brainerd? Perhaps she'd like to come, too."

"Oh, no," said George, with a quick return of his constraint. "She doesn't care about it; we scarcely ever go out together in the evening."

Wells, feeling himself a blundering fool, was glad of the respite offered by the show. That at least promised silence and a chance to escape from the recurring shadow of the wife who apparently blighted George's natural spirits. And the man's attitude toward

her, too, was exasperating—an impossible attitude. Wells could not help thinking that if he had made such a mistake as George, from mere manly decency he would either try to make the best of it by concealing it from casual callers, or he would take care to avoid such callers. Why hadn't George ignored the telegram? Surely he might have foreseen that he could offer no entertainment to an old friend under the circumstances. And he could not have brought Wells there merely to let him know that he was disappointed in his wife. He failed to see George's point of view at all; and his opinion of his old-time chum suffered considerably. That he should be without even an assumed loyalty to the woman who was his wife seemed to point to a deterioration of character. Harry Wells registered a solemn if silent resolve never again to look up an old friend unless he had more definite information about him.

Fortunately the short walk homeward was a silent one. The evening was well done away with; he could go to his room immediately on arriving at the house. There would remain only an uncomfortable breakfast in the morning, a plea of pressing business, and he could be away, wiser but none the worse off for his pleasureless visit. Poor old Georgie!

His plea of fatigue was accepted without comment by George and his wife. Brainerd went upstairs to assure himself that the guest room was properly provided for his friend's comfort. Wells, in the interim, vainly tried to carry on an interesting conversation with the strange woman who was George's wife. Once in his room, he gave a sigh of relief. He had planned to stay over the next day, but fortunately had given no definite expression of that intention. He could advance his business trip by a day, and select a train leaving fairly early the next morning as the one which he must take. He would do that to make it seem plausible; perhaps he'd better tell them tonight.

His railway time-tables were in the inner pocket of the coat he had worn on the train, and he went to get them. His hand, feeling in the pocket, found them—but discovered also the absence of something else.

The pocket had contained a bill fold, which held all his money except the change he had transferred—and the bill fold was missing!

He could not believe it at first. He was perfectly sure the money had been there when he had hung up the suit. It must be there now. But a careful search did not reveal it. Except for the time-tables and the check book which he always carried, the pocket was empty. Nor did the floor of the room, after a careful search, disclose the missing property.

Vainly he struggled against the suspicion which had come into his mind. The two windows, he quickly ascertained, were locked on the inside; no thief could have entered that way. It was not more than three hours since he had left the room, and during that three hours the money had disappeared. And George's wife had been in the house when he left!

The thought brought a sickening feeling to him. It was not merely the loss of the money—five hundred dollars—though that was bad enough. But that it should have happened here, where he was a guest! With any other host and hostess, the situation would have been a delicate one, to say the least. But with them!

Was this, then, the heart of Brainerd's disappointment with his wife—the reason for his lack of the loyalty which any self-respecting man ought to have for his helpmate? Did George suspect that she was a—— Did George *know?* But if he did, all the more rea-

son why he should have avoided the visit when he could very easily have done so.

Harry Wells' first definite reaction was to say nothing about his loss. But —five hundred dollars! And, too, the mere act of keeping silent was an insult to his host; it assumed that he, or his wife, had a guilty knowledge of the theft. And Wells did not care to convict either of them on mere suspicion, which might, after all, be totally unjust. Why, it was—it was a terrible accusation! Much worse than mere theft. It was a low sort of thief indeed who would steal from a guest!

He finally decided to take the straightforward course and report his loss at once. The sound of voices below told him that the Brainerds were still up; so he descended and knocked at the living-room door.

The voices were raised, as if in argument, and he had to knock a second time before he made himself heard.

"Why, Mr. Wells!" cried the woman. "Something I can get for you? There is, I'm sure! I'm a poor hostess, I'm afraid."

Striving to keep his tone of voice perfectly matter of fact, the visitor told the purport of his interruption.

"I've just discovered, Mrs. Brainerd, that—that a sum of money, amounting to five hundred dollars, which I had in my pocket, is missing."

"Missing?" Her startled eyes bored into his; the placidly common look dropped from her like a mask. In her new aspect she looked strangely familiar —as if he had known her somewhere before. "Was it—did you have it when you went out?"

"No. It was in the coat that I left hanging in my room."

Husband and wife exchanged a quick glance—a glance in which terror seemed to play a part. Molly turned.

"Why, this is awful, Mr. Wells! Right in our house—while you were our guest. Oh, dear! Tell me all about it, please. Something must be done. Five hundred dollars!"

There was little to tell save the bare fact, but Harry Wells repeated it, telling also of his search of the room. George Brainerd listened, but without uttering any comment or question. His face had a frozen look of fear; he seemed to have been entirely paralyzed by the news.

The three of them ascended the stairs, examined the room, searched everywhere without avail.

"I—I think I'd better telephone the police station, don't you, George?" asked the woman at last. "Five hundred dollars! Oh, this is terrible!"

They trailed downstairs again, and Mrs. Brainerd went into the dining room, where the telephone was located. The two men, in the living room, were nervous and silent.

A ring of the front door bell gave Brainerd a welcome excuse to leave the room. Wells, not intending to eavesdrop, could not help hearing the conversation in the hall.

"Oh, here you are, Mr. Brainerd! Rather an unconventional hour to call, isn't it? But one of your neighbors told me you'd returned home a few minutes ago—and I've called five or six times before, you know—about this bill."

By an effort of will Harry Wells succeeded in preventing the ensuing sounds from the hall from registering any meaning on his brain; but he could not purge his mind of what he had already heard. George was hard up; he was being dunned! The fact, taken by itself, would have roused his sympathy and pity, but in connection with his own recent loss——

It flashed into his mind now that Brainerd had gone up to the guest room before him—that he, as well as his wife, had had ample opportunity to take the money. Perhaps in anticipation of this

very bill collector, who had evidently been making things uncomfortable for them. Loyally though he tried to combat the insidious thought, it stuck in his mind. One or the other—what mattered it which one?

Between the room where he stood and the dining room was only a portière, and he soon heard George Brainerd's hoarse whisper to his wife:

"Got some money, Molly? I can't stave off this man any longer. The bill's for twenty-one dollars, and I've only got eighteen."

"No," said Molly, "only some change. I had more, but I went out to get some eggs for breakfast soon after you left, and when I got back I met the gas man with the month's bill. Wait. Will this help out?" Harry Wells heard the clink of some coins; then George returned to the waiting man in the hall.

What he had unwillingly overheard brought one gleam of comfort, anyhow; they did not have the missing money, or there would have been no such scrambling to get together twenty-one dollars.

Or would there? They would scarcely try to use the money right away, if it were in their possession—while Wells was still in the house. For that matter, might not the visit of the bill collector be a purely fictitious one, staged on purpose to give him the impression which had first come to him? Angry at himself, Harry Wells tried to avoid thinking about his suspicions.

In a moment George Brainerd returned to the room, and, though evidently ill at ease, he certainly did not act like a man who had committed a robbery, in the eyes of Wells, who had known him so long.

Molly appeared from the dining room. "I've been trying to get the Morton Street police station, but the line's been busy. I'm going to keep on trying, of course; but you needn't wait up, Mr. Wells. You'll need your rest, and your staying up couldn't help matters a bit."

"No," agreed Brainerd. Then, as his wife closed the portières behind her, he added in a low tone: "Don't think I don't feel responsibility for this, Harry. You're my guest, and I can tell you I'll see that you don't suffer any loss under my roof. Molly's right; you can't help. You go to bed—and rely on me."

This last remark, and the baffling circumstances which had preceded it—which had begun almost with his visit—did not keep Harry Wells awake; but they did rob his sleep of its restfulness. He was up early in the morning, however, buoyed by the thought that his stay was nearly at an end. Before leaving his room he repacked his bags and carried them downstairs with him, depositing them in the hall. Just to escape from this atmosphere, even without the lost money—it would be like tasting freedom again after prison.

Early as he was, he found the Brainerds already at breakfast. The woman apologized, profusely and rather nervously, for the fact. "George has an appointment to meet a prospect—a house seeker—rather early."

"Yes," confirmed George, wiping his mouth on his napkin, "it's time I was off now. Awfully sorry, old man. I'll try to see you at the station before you go; I think I can make it. As for that—that other matter——"

"Never mind, George," said his wife firmly; "I'll tell Mr. Wells about that." Brainerd, evidently relieved, dashed out, leaving his old friend rather amazed at the cool way in which he mentioned—and did nothing else about—the missing money.

As soon as the front door had slammed Mrs. Brainerd excused herself to go upstairs. "I go to work, you know; I may as well get that done up now. And I'll have time when I come down, and you're through eating, to talk to you about——"

"Oh, by all means!" interrupted Wells with a rather cynical gallantry. "That can wait, of course. And I'll make out very well here!"

Though he had been half prepared on the evening before to accept his loss silently, he began to be angry now when she had left. Did they think—whether they were guilty or not—that five hundred dollars was a mere nothing to him? Were they "playing him for a sucker?" Probably it was not very often, he reflected bitterly, that they could entice into their home any one with more than pocket money. And they'd never entice him again!

As for the woman—had he seen her before? What was the explanation of that elusive sense of familiarity which had recurred to him just now?

It seemed but a moment when he heard her step on the staircase. He looked around as she entered the room—and gasped with amazement when he saw what she held in her hands.

"This—this money," she began, "I found—I've counted the bills, and there's just five hundred dollars here. I found it under the carpet in your room. It must have dropped from your pocket, don't you think, and got lost?" She pressed the bills into his hand.

Mechanically he counted them. "Five hundred dollars," he agreed. "But, Mrs. Brainerd, this can't be the money I lost. Mine was all in twenties and fifties, while this——"

"Oh, you must have been mistaken!" she affirmed desperately. "I'm sure this is——"

"And my money," went on Wells levelly, fixing her unwilling eyes with his own, "was in a bill fold. I don't understand this at all." He motioned to thrust it back into her hands; she shrank from him, trying to avoid his gaze. "No, no! It must——"

Suddenly he recognized her. "You—you're Marie Chandler, aren't you?"

A look almost of terror came over her face, which showed him that his guess was a true one—that she was indeed the girl who had been a classmate of his and George's at the coeducational college—a girl in whom he himself had shown more than a passing interest in his undergraduate days. And that realization was not the least startling thing in the series of events.

To avoid his gaze, she had turned her face toward the window, and now he saw it suffused with a new look.

Outside, approaching the front door, was George Brainerd returning, and with him a uniformed policeman!

They entered, and their footsteps went into the living room. Molly, with a mute look at her guest, pushed through the portières and went to them.

Left to himself, Harry Wells decided quickly. In memory of the days that had been, at college, he would sacrifice the five hundred dollars. He flattened out the roll of bills and placed it under the tablecloth at the place where he had been eating—where the plate above it would conceal it if the officer should come casually searching. Money for his trip, to replace it, he could obtain at a downtown bank by use of his check book.

He then tiptoed to the hall, took his two grips, and made his way through the kitchen to the back door. He sped across two or three unfenced yards, regardless of his suspicious appearance, before he made for the street. Nor did he breathe easily until he was safely aboard a car, bound for Egleston Square.

So Marie—Molly—whom he had admired at college for her easy air of refinement, for her undeviating good taste in matters of dress and deportment—it was she who had deteriorated into this vulgar, flashily dressed woman—perhaps worse! It was she who was already dragging George Brainerd down. It was she who had stolen the money!

Except for the discrepancy in the denomination of the bills, that seemed the only plausible solution of the puzzle. He remembered the look George had given her last night on the discovery of the theft. Had she done such things before? Had he been dreading that very occurrence? Had he made her promise to restore the money in the morning, and, fearing lest she break her promise, brought a policeman home with him on some trumped-up errand to frighten her into keeping it? At any rate, Harry Wells was glad that he had left the money there. Poor Marie! It was saddening to witness the disintegration of a character that one had respected and admired—almost loved.

It was nearly two weeks later when Wells returned from his trip. Though he had not been able to forget the untoward incidents of his Boston visit, he had relegated them fairly well to the background of his mind.

On his desk was a pile of mail which had not been forwarded, owing to his unsettled itinerary. He was beginning to go through it when a caller was announced.

He glanced at the bit of pasteboard which his secretary had brought in. George Brainerd!

It was a different-looking George somehow than the man he had left so surreptitiously in Boston. The natty, well-dressed look which had distinguished him was gone—quite inexplicably, because he was evidently wearing the same clothes as on the day of the visit, though they seemed now not to fit.

Brainerd noted the other's appraising looks, and explained. "I've filled out a lot; gained ten pounds in two weeks. And by the best sort of treatment—good, plain, hard work."

"Work?" asked Wells.

"Yes—as a house carpenter. You know, I'd done that sort of thing with dad, years ago, before I went to college. So I had no trouble getting on. Outdoors all the time, plenty of exertion—but that's not what I came to tell you."

"No, I suppose not," agreed Wells dryly.

"You've had a letter from the Boston police—about that missing five hundred?" asked George.

Harry Wells waved at the pile of mail. "Maybe; I haven't seen it yet. Just got back to-day."

"Then it can wait," said Brainerd, "until after my explanation—the explanation I owe you, because of your unfortunate experience, but owe most of all to—another.

"And I've got to eat a pretty hearty meal of crow, old man, to do it. So don't interrupt, please." He averted his face and went on:

"I've got to tell you, first, that I've never amounted to much. Big ideas and little accomplishments, you know. Too proud to dig; always looking for the easy money. Real estate! That was just a blind for loafing around genteelly, building air castles. Of course, I did occasionally sell a house or some land on commission, otherwise we couldn't have lived at all. But all that seemed small to me; I was after big things. The stock market got me—and you know how much a man is likely to win there.

"Then there was Molly! she told me you'd recognized her. I really didn't want her to go to work; it was so—so common. And I thought she spent it all on clothes; those tasteless things in brilliant colors that were really her old ones, home dyed to deceive me. I never knew how much of her earnings went into our household expenses—and into something else. And I was disappointed in her in other ways, too; she seemed to have become so different, so commonplace.

"Harry, can you believe it? She was acting all that; purposely assuming such a character that I'd hesitate to take her

around with me socially. And a married man can't very well mix in circles where his wife isn't received. Trying to cut me off from people with incomes and standards of living beyond my own, to bring me down to the level of common working folks—because that's where I belonged, until I'd shown some signs of making good. Just think what it must have meant, Harry, to a woman of fine sensibilities like hers! And for me—the cheapest four-flusher, and worse, in Boston!

"I'm ashamed to admit that I thought she'd taken your money, tempted beyond endurance by our perpetual state of being hard up. And she—she thought I'd taken it, and not entirely without reason. There was a rather shady real-estate transaction some time ago—nothing illegal, you understand. And I never knew, until our mutual confessions on the day you left, that she'd learned of it, and repaid the injured party out of money that she'd secretly saved. And, Harry—she thought, by that indication, that I was sinking so low—well, anyhow, she thought I'd stolen your money; so without a word to me she took every cent she could scrape together, that she'd been saving, and paid you back—to save me!

"The real solution—well, it's not quite so bad as that, thank God! She went out to a store that night, soon after we did, and on her return she met a man in the act of ringing the doorbell. He presented her with a gas bill, which she paid. That gas bill was a fake, like the man who presented it. He was a sneak thief; he'd seen us all go out, had picked the lock on the door, searched the house, and found your money in your pocket. When Molly returned he was in the act of leaving, and he used that fake gas bill as an alibi—which worked. We wouldn't know yet about it, or about the theft of your money, if I hadn't happened to meet a policeman that next morning, who was looking for him. He'd been operating at other houses in the vicinity, too, you see.

"Well, they caught the fellow the next day, and found your money and a lot of other property in his room. You can get your money back by identifying it; the police will have written you to that effect."

"I'm glad!" cried Harry Wells fervently. "Not about the money, but because——"

"Yes," said Brainerd; "I'm glad, too. It was a hard jolt to me, the whole affair; but, thank Heaven, it jolted me into my senses! I can feel like a real man again. I'm getting good money as a carpenter, and it won't be many months before I'll go into business on my own account as a builder—what with that five hundred dollars of Molly's savings that you refused to take. And she—she's quit her job, and become her old self, her real self, again. And we've got a real home now; the same house, but quite a different home from the one you saw, a home that we'll be glad and proud to have you visit some day!"

"And we'll make that visit soon, if you don't mind, Georgie!" said Wells, grasping his friend's hand. "Because—well, I've got to make a million apologies for the hard things I've been thinking about her—the greatest, truest little woman in the world—your wife!"

THREE OF A FAMILY ON JURY

MOTHER, father, and son served on a jury in a New Jersey court recently. The town of Montclair was the scene of this unusual occurrence. Seven women and five men composed the jury.

Rose of Destiny

by Bayard Blackford

Author of "The Brown Arm," etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

FROM the window of his Park Avenue apartment Felix Burton sees a young woman hand a small package to a chauffeur. He is sure she is the woman to whom he gave a lift in his taxi on the previous night, when a heavy rain sanctioned the unconventional courtesy. A few minutes later he hears a shot and rushes down into the street to find that the woman has been wounded. He has her removed to his apartment, a doctor is called, and he rushes off to act as best man at the wedding of his friend, James Bolden. Before they start for the church the chauffeur, to whom he saw the young lady hand the parcel, delivers a box, containing a greenish rose, for Bolden's buttonhole. The rose is poisoned, and Bolden dies in the church, just after his marriage to Miss Cynthia Shaw, before they sign the church register. Returning to his apartment, Burton learns that an operation probably will save the life of the wounded girl. She asks him if Bolden wore a flower in his coat. Chief of Police Sakeman sends for Burton, and Lieutenant Detective Grant is put on the case. He learns that the girl is Miss Rhoda Maines, who was to have been married on the day she was shot to Herbert James Carron. William Castle, the chauffeur, goes to pawn a wrist watch, which Rhoda Maines gave him for the prompt delivery of the rose, while Grant tries to trace Carron. The detective finds that he lived at the Bellevue Hotel for three weeks; Grant then returns to headquarters to report to the chief.

CHAPTER XII.

CROSS-QUESTIONS.

WHEN Felix Burton returned to his apartment after his interview with William Sakeman, the chief of police, he found Doctor Dewar in possession.

"I am glad you have come back," said the doctor fussily. "Very glad! The surgeon will be here in half an hour, and we shall operate at once. The patient has expressed a very strong desire to see you before the operation. I think that it would be well to grant her request."

Burton received the intelligence with an odd mixture of sensations. His first instinctive impulse was to jump at the chance of seeing her again—to miss no opportunity of seeing her. His second impulse was to avoid a meeting at all costs, until he knew where he stood. He remembered very vividly how he had felt after his last sight of her, and he was anxious to avert the possibility of having his emotions stampeded. The doctor awaited his answer.

"Of course, I'll see her," he said. Impulse would have to give way to common sense. He was perfectly able to keep his head. Good heavens! A sick girl of whom he knew nothing!

The doctor led him into the bedroom, and on the way was seized with a sudden sensitiveness regarding the proprieties.

"She wants to see you alone," he whispered. "I gather you would prefer the door to be left open."

Burton agreed, smothering a laugh, and together they entered the room. The girl with a weak motion of the hand beckoned him to approach the bed. The doctor withdrew.

For a moment he stood in silence by her side, feeling inexplicably like an awkward schoolboy, and wondering what to do with his hands. Her head turned toward him, and he became conscious of the supple whiteness of her throat.

"They are going to operate on me presently," she said in that calm, even contralto, which reminded him of water lapping against a boat.

"Yes, but it will be all right, you know. They wouldn't do it here if it were a really serious affair."

Her lips parted in a faint smile. "Thanks awfully," she said. "But I'm not worrying about it in the least. I wanted to see you beforehand to tell you how grateful I am for your kindness."

"Please don't talk like that."

She closed her eyes, and he thought he had better go, but she spoke again. "There's one other thing—if you wouldn't mind," she said.

"Yes?" he prompted.

"If I die under the operation, will you see that my death is immediately advertised?"

He started at the strangeness of the request, then realized that as yet he had not the means of granting it.

"Certainly—of course!" he said. "But—the fact is—I don't know your name."

"Rhoda Maines," she answered.

Burton winced as he heard her name. Rhoda—an eerie whisper of the rose!

"Of Cabarrita, Jamaica," she added.

Burton clenched his fist. Jamaica—Bolden—the Italian! William Sakeman! He heard a faint commotion in the hall outside and knew that the front door had been opened.

Something turned his gaze back to the girl on the bed. The calm had left her face. She was staring with horror at the looking-glass on the dressing table, which carried a direct reflection from the hall. With a sudden convulsive effort she gripped Burton's hand.

"Don't let her come here!" she exclaimed wildly. "Send her away. Please, please send her away."

Burton's first thought was that she had relapsed into delirium.

"It's all right," he said hastily. "There's no earthly need for alarm. Whoever it is, nothing can harm you here."

"Send her away," entreated the girl, apparently not hearing him.

"Yes, yes," he said. "But keep calm, or you will injure yourself."

He strode across the room and out of the door. In the hall outside he stood face to face with Cynthia Shaw.

Burton closed behind him the door of what was now the sick room. It was not in his nature to be embarrassed by a social difficulty, and he advanced toward Cynthia with perfect composure.

"Good evening, Miss Shaw."

Cynthia, on the other hand, was grateful for the half light of the hall. Bolden's best man was the last person on earth she would have expected to meet on her present quest. The tale which her nimble brain had concocted on leaving the shop on Prospect Street would now be quite useless. She would have to prepare another on the spur of the moment.

"Can you spare me a moment, Mr. Burton?" she asked in order to gain time.

"Of course," said Burton, as he led the way to his siting room.

It was his habit to think in unspoken words.

"This sure is enough to jar a fellow," ran his thoughts.

Cynthia seated herself deliberately in an effective pose, which was quite wasted on Burton. She had wits enough to perceive at once that it would be useless to try and dazzle him. She was even vaguely conscious that he was irritated by her presence, and she knew that her task would be a difficult one.

Cynthia was clever enough to prefer using her beauty to her brains, as a general rule. She perceived that her beauty would be ineffective on the present occasion, and promptly fell back upon her wits.

"I had no idea that this was your apartment, Mr. Burton," she began.

"I did not come to see you personally, at all."

"You disappoint me," he said easily. Then, as if remembering that she was officially a stricken bride, he added seriously: "I thought perhaps you had come to see me about poor Bolden."

"No," she answered coldly. "I came to make inquiries about the girl who, I am told, was brought here this morning."

"Oh!" said Burton. Cynthia sensed intuitively that his hand had sprung to his rapier. This was what she wanted.

Before Burton could make further comment, there was a knock on the door.

"Pardon me, sir," said Walters. "Doctor James Clark, the surgeon, is here," he added, as Burton looked at a loss.

"Oh, yes, of course!" he said. "Excuse me a moment, Miss Shaw."

Doctor Dewar appeared in the doorway. "Mr. Burton, Doctor Clark wants to operate at once."

"All right," said Burton. "I take it there is nothing I can do. I have made all the arrangements, Doctor Dewar."

"Nothing whatever," replied the physician. "Everything is ready for Doctor Clark."

"I shall be in this room all the time," said Burton, "and"—he added with the slightest hesitation—"you might let me have word as soon as you know how things are going."

Doctor Dewar nodded and took the surgeon into the sick room. Burton returned his attention to Cynthia, who had heard every word of his conversation with the doctors.

"You have just heard all I can tell you about the lady, Miss Shaw," he said. "I gather that for the next half an hour or so there will be no news of any kind. Perhaps you would prefer to wait and hear the result of the operation?"

Cynthia knew perfectly well that his last words simply meant: "What the dickens has it all to do with you, anyway?" She knew, too, that she would have to answer the question, unless she could stave it off by a counterattack.

"Thanks," she said, "but we had better settle first whether she is a friend of mine, as I think. What is her name?"

For a fraction of a second Burton hesitated. When she had given him her name just now in the bedroom, it had seemed like a sacred confidence. Ought he to regard it as such? Absurd! Her name would have to be known, anyway.

"She is a Miss Rhoda Maines," he replied with an affected indifference which did not deceive Cynthia. She had observed his hesitation.

"Not the Maines of Vermont, surely?" she asked with apparent apprehension.

Burton had never heard of the Maines of Vermont, nor had Cynthia, until that moment.

"No—I think not," he said vaguely.

"Maines—Maines," repeated Cynthia absently. "The only other Maines I know come from Ohio."

"Confound the woman!" thought Burton. Aloud he said: "In any case I gather that she is not an intimate friend of yours—as you supposed at first."

"No," replied Cynthia. "I am out of it, thank Heaven. But I am dreadfully sorry for you, Mr. Burton. I know how helpless a man feels when there is some one ill in the house. Father is simply dreadful. If I can be of any assistance——"

"It's very good of you to offer," said Burton, "but I think I have done everything. I think I shall succeed in doing everything that's necessary."

"You won't go on thinking that much longer," she said with an indulgent smile. "Admit, now, you have clean

forgotten to wire her people. I know you haven't, because they'd be here if you had."

Burton was not quick enough to keep a faint hint of confusion from his eyes.

"You see, you want my help after all," put in Cynthia. "Write out a telegram, and I will take it at once to the office."

Burton went over to the writing table as if he intended to adopt her suggestion. He was thinking: "That's pretty crude"—which was just what Cynthia intended him to think.

There was no shirking the fact that she had presented him with an insoluble dilemma. It was a confounded nuisance, too, that one of his own set had already stumbled upon that which he had hoped to keep secret until he should know where he stood. He bit his lip in vexation and then decided to take refuge in boldness. "This dainty little fool amused poor Bolden and, on the strength of that, thinks she's irresistible. I'm afraid she'll have to be put into her proper place."

He left the writing table and, striding toward her, towered above the armchair in which she was posing.

"Suppose we agree to drop all this, Miss Shaw," he said suggestively.

"All what?" she demanded, playing her innocent blue eyes.

Burton had the gift of being able to quarrel with a woman as if she were a man. "All the humbug which you and I have been handing out to each other for the last ten minutes," he answered. "Let's start going for each other on a basis of admitted facts. You have discovered that I am not anxious to talk about the girl in the next room. That's one for you. I have discovered that you knew perfectly well who she was before you entered this flat—that you don't really wonder whether she comes from Vermont or any other fool place. Is that agreed?"

"Very well," she said shortly. She looked as pretty as ever, and Burton realized that she didn't look so stupid as she had looked thirty seconds ago.

"Very well!" she repeated. "You begin by going for me." It was a challenge which his instincts forbade him to refuse.

"All right," he said. "Question No. 1. Why is Rhoda Maines absolutely afraid of you?"

CHAPTER XIII.

CYNTHIA.

HE had hurled his question as if it were a bomb that would destroy her impudent composure. It was a time for desperate measures, for he felt that his nerve was faltering under the strain. Part of him—the part of a man that feels and does not reason—had accompanied the doctors into the room where Rhoda Maines lay. While he watched Cynthia, somewhere deep down in him he was calculating that they were probably just getting Rhoda under the anæsthetic.

Cynthia was in no hurry to make answer. She abandoned brains to fall back on beauty. She was sitting with ankles crossed, the fingers of one hand lightly touching her cheek, her obvious blue eyes, deceptively childish, looking up into his. The pose suited her dress, and she knew it.

Burton, however, was immune. He even felt a certain buoyancy as he realized how wholly callous she left him.

"I am asking you why Rhoda Maines is absolutely afraid of you," he repeated. He was frankly bullying her now. The memory of Rhoda's stricken face, as she had caught sight of Cynthia's reflection in the mirror, gave him a definite relish for the task.

"I didn't know she was afraid of me," said Cynthia thoughtfully. "But I'm not really surprised to hear it. On the whole, she had a certain amount of excuse, I suppose."

Burton winced. He waited for her to continue, but again she seemed to be in no hurry. Cynthia had retreated to brains again. "Go on," he urged.

"I have reason to believe that my existence interfered with her plans for her own future," said Cynthia. She watched Burton's face and decided to show that she could bully, too.

"Naturally it is a subject I do not care to discuss in detail—with a man I scarcely know," she added with quiet brutality.

Baby-blue eyes, a stunning gown, and a prettily pert manner! It would take more than that to make him lose his temper, Burton told himself. But he had to admit that it was a near thing. He pulled himself together with a superfluous laugh, which contrived to sound almost natural. The inneundo, slight though it was, infuriated him.

"That's a stock stunt, dear lady, and it's a bit threadbare," he forced himself to say easily. "When a woman does it, it's called being a cat. When a man does it—well, we alter the last letter of the word."

Cynthia shrugged her shoulders effectively.

"I perceive that you're interested in her," she said. "Perhaps I have said too much. I am sorry. You should have given me proper warning."

Burton bit his lip. "You have said so much that it is absolutely necessary for you to say more. I insist on your telling me all that you know about this girl."

Cynthia thrilled at the suppressed violence of his manner. It was as if he had added that he would strangle her if she were to refuse. The baby-blue eyes danced and steadied.

"Bolden met her in Jamaica," said Cynthia, as if she were meekly submitting to his will.

Burton knew that he was approaching a crisis. This dainty little cat was going to supply the link between Rhoda and Bolden. He was determined to discover all that Cynthia knew of the matter, yet he dreaded the possible results of his investigation. Her apparent willingness to enlighten him threw him momentarily out of gear. He had counted on her opposition.

He forced himself to lead her on, though in doing so he might destroy his own peace of mind. "Not very damning evidence!" he exclaimed. "I believe that in those places everybody knows everybody else."

"Yes, and acquaintances have a knack of ripening quickly," returned Cynthia. "The tropics are notoriously romantic."

He perceived that the task of drawing her out would not be easy. "Look here," he said suddenly, "have you ever met Miss Maines?"

"No," she answered, "but I've no doubt she must be simply delightful. Bolden told me so. He was deeply in love with her."

"Then why didn't he marry her—I mean, of course, before he came back to the United States?"

"Or afterward?" she said. "I assure you I am not fool enough to think that I diverted his attention. Bolden thought me nice to look at, I know, but he was a great deal too decent to pretend that he thought anything else about me. I was not the reason—I came in as a sort of aftermath, to divert his thoughts."

Burton frowned. "Why didn't he marry her?" he repeated. He was demanding an answer which above all things he did not wish to hear.

"You are very obtuse," said Cynthia. "I always thought men had a very thorough understanding of arrangements of this sort."

Before he could reply she drawled on: "I can see you're going on the absurd principle that one woman always tries to slander another when they are more or less concerned with the same

man. You had better have a chat with father."

"Your father!" exclaimed Burton. "What has he to do with it?"

"He had to be told when Bolden was arranging the settlements. Father is great on settlements and wills and things like that. He wanted to know why Bolden was making a heavy charge on his estate—the charge was in her interest. Bolden wanted to make ample provision for her, you know. She thought I might object, and that probably is why she was afraid of me. It's the only reason I can think of."

Burton was like a man on the rack, and cursed himself for his own folly. What should it matter to him whether the tale were true, or a foul slander? His mind flew to the imagined scene in the next room. Perhaps at that moment the operation was over. Perhaps at that moment she was dying under the anæsthetic.

"Arrangements of property and money provisions and all the rest of it may mean nothing," he said. "He may have had business dealings with her or her people. You can't build on that sort of thing."

"I'm not."

"What are you building on then?"

"A rose."

Burton caught his breath. He knew that the girl had sensed the sudden tensity of his interest, but her next words made him think that she did not understand exactly what he was feeling.

"You think that's absurd," said Cynthia. "But it isn't. In the early stages of their romance they seem to have been in the habit of sending each other a particular kind of rose that grows in the tropics. Bolden was a sentimental man, you know, in spite of his prosaic engagement to me. He used to keep one of these withered roses in a sort of shrine, and because he and I were good friends, with no kind of pretense, he showed it to me one day. On another occasion he took me to the Botanical Gardens for the express purpose of showing me a similar specimen, growing in one of the tropical houses. It was there that he asked me whether I would mind his wearing one of these roses—which was apparently to be sent from Jamaica—on the day he and I were to be married. Here is Doctor Clark."

The last words were spoken as the door opened, and the operating surgeon appeared.

Burton felt his head reeling. "The operation, doctor, has it been successful?" he demanded jerkily.

"Oh, perfectly successful—perfectly successful," answered the surgeon. "It was a trifling matter in itself. The only element of danger lay in the possibility of the bullet shifting before I could remove it. It did not shift. She will be little the worse when she recovers from the anæsthetic, and, in a fortnight's time, physically speaking, she will have forgotten it."

If occurred to Burton that Doctor Clark was waiting for his fee. Cynthia seemed to realize it, too.

"Good-by, Mr. Burton," she said. "I am so very glad to hear that Miss Maines is out of danger."

Burton looked at her in surprise. The color had left her cheeks, the vitality had gone from her voice, and she looked as if she were about to faint. There flashed into his mind the realization that she had been on the rack of suspense during this last quarter of an hour; that the news of Rhoda's safety had come to her as an agony of relief.

"Don't see me out, please," she said, and passed from the room.

When the doctor left, Burton poured himself out a stiff whisky.

"Cynthia Shaw was lying," he concluded. "But not because she wanted to—because she had to. And why, in the name of all the gods, did she have

to?" He took the light suit case Walters had packed for him and went out.

In the privacy of a severely furnished hotel bedroom Burton remained for a long hour wrestling with his problem. Try as he would, he could make no progress in any direction. At last he eliminated everything but his own feelings. Blind circumstance had thrust Rhoda Maines in his path in the first instance—or so it seemed. Fate, as it were, had tossed her in helpless distress at his feet, and every fiber of his being longed to respond to the call of chivalry.

Chivalry? What else could it be, he demanded of himself. Surely a sane man could not fall in love with a girl he did not know—a girl of whom dark things were said with apparent justification. There was the rub. Cynthia Shaw's words must be justified to the hilt, or disproved with all possible speed, if he were to retain his peace of mind.

CHAPTER XIV.

A LEAD.

WHEN Doctor Clark finished the operation on Rhoda Maines, he dismissed the girl from his mind as a patient. Surgically considered, the case was without interest—a trifling operation which a general practitioner could have performed. Nevertheless, an irritating duty awaited him before he would be at liberty to forget it.

Entering his car, which was waiting for him, he was driven to headquarters, where he was at once shown into the presence of the chief.

William Sakeman, looking more like a prosperous business man than usual, rose and welcomed the distinguished surgeon.

"It's very good of you to answer to my note so promptly, Doctor Clark," he said.

The surgeon mumbled assurances and opened his bag, from which he took a small brown chip box. "That is the bullet which I extracted from the wound," he said, handing the chip box to the chief.

"Thank you," said Sakeman, opening the box. "Hm! Small caliber. Doesn't look like a very dangerous bullet. I suppose it would have been sufficient to cause death."

"Certainly, if it had entered a vital part—which very nearly happened. As it is, it has done comparatively little harm. The girl will be none the worse for it—though I suppose from your point of view it's a case of attempted murder."

"Precisely," said Sakeman. "Can you tell me whether the shot was fired at close quarters? And from what direction?"

"I can't answer the first question, but I can help with the second. Following the instructions of your letter, I took careful note of the manner in which the flesh had been torn. As a result, I can tell you definitely that the bullet was fired from above. It entered the body at an angle of twenty degrees—that is, as nearly as I could ascertain. Allow a margin of five degrees for error both ways."

"From above—at an angle of twenty degrees!" repeated the chief.

"Don't let me mislead you," said the surgeon. "Suppose she had been shot at very close range by a person considerably taller than herself. It seems to me quite possible that that might account for the angle."

For a moment the chief was silent. "It is theoretically possible, of course," he said. "But it would have to be very close—within a couple of feet; in which case the clothing ought to show traces. Hm! I want to get at the girl herself. How soon will it be safe for me to interview her, doctor?"

"As to that you must consult Doctor Dewar," replied the surgeon. "For myself, I see no reason why you should

not approach her to-morrow. I don't expect she will be feverish. Beyond the chance of that, her only suffering will be the slight pain of the stitches."

The chief asked a number of questions, which led nowhere. Then he thanked Doctor Clark and allowed him to depart, with the promise that he would not be called as a witness, if it were possible to avoid doing so.

As soon as he was left alone, he touched his bell. A lieutenant answered.

"A cast is to be taken of the bullet inside this box, as soon as possible," he ordered. "Then the bullet is to be taken to the arms expert, who is to report on it to me immediately."

Sakeman opened the center drawer of his desk and took out a large roll of cartridge paper. He unrolled it and placed it between paper weights. It was a large map, specially drawn, of the Prospect Street corner of Park Avenue. Marked with a cross was the approximate point at which Rhoda Maines had fallen.

"An angle of twenty degrees—fired from above!" mused Sakeman. For a time he studied the map in silence. Then he picked up the receiver of the house telephone.

"I want you, Grant."

A few moments later the detective entered the room.

"The Prospect Street affair, Grant," said the chief. "Have you anything to report?"

"Nothing substantial. I've got the chauffeur who was on the corner at the time. His name's William Castle—not very much use to us. I had a little difficulty with him—he became frightened, like they often do. All I obtained from him was confirmation of the officer's statement as to the point where the girl fell."

"Hm! There was more than one chauffeur there, surely?"

"Yes, there were four in all. I've seen the other three, but, as they were on the opposite side of the stand at the time, they really witnessed nothing."

"Very well," said the chief. "We'll leave that for the present and come to another point. I want you to go round to the apartment now, ask for Mr. Burton, and request permission to examine the clothing. Look particularly for signs of the bullet having been fired at point-blank."

"All right, chief."

"I'll give you half an hour for that, Grant. At the end of that time meet me at the corner of Prospect Street."

The detective looked faintly surprised. It was very unusual for the chief to concern himself with the details of detection. Sakeman perceived this and was anxious to destroy the impression that he was not trusting his subordinate.

"Possibly I may be able to give you a suggestion to work on, Grant," he said pleasantly. "It will all depend on your report on the clothing. In half an hour, then."

When the chief emerged from the taxi that deposited him at the Prospect Street corner, Detective Grant was already waiting for him.

At a sign from Sakeman they walked together up Park Avenue.

"Mr. Burton was out—gone to the Berkeley," said the detective, "but I obtained the clothing from the nurse. I could find no sign of the bullet having been fired at close range. The clothing was not in any way singed or discolored. There was just the ordinary tear where it had entered."

"All right, Grant," said the chief. "We'll just walk down Prospect Street now, and I'll give you that suggestion I spoke of. I will tell you first, Grant, that bullet was fired from above—that it entered the body at an angle of twenty degrees."

"Yes, sir," said the detective respectfully, and made no further remark until

they had turned the corner on Prospect Street. He gathered from the tone of the chief's voice that the latter was for some reason in an excellent mood.

The left-hand side of the Park Avenue end of Prospect Street, as is common knowledge, contains no buildings, but a high brick wall bounds the garden of a famous home. The wall runs for the better part of a hundred yards up Prospect Street. Sakeman called the detective's attention to the wall. Then he demanded to be shown the exact spot where the girl had fallen.

"As nearly as I can fix it, it must have been about five feet from this lamp-post. She fell straight forward—her head had been in line with the lamp-post. Jeffreys, the officer on the beat, remembered that distinctly."

"Good!" said Sakeman. "She was standing approximately where I am standing now. Now watch my umbrella carefully."

The chief held the handle of his umbrella against his hip and slowly raised the point. A couple of people stared at him curiously, but this did not worry him in the least. Nevertheless, when he spoke again he pitched his voice so as no one but the detective should hear.

"My umbrella, Grant," he went on, "is now approximately at an angle of twenty degrees to my body. That is to say, the bullet entered the girl's body as if it had been fired, let us say, from the ferrule of this umbrella.

"Now we can say this positively. If the bullet was not fired at very close range—which we know now it was not—say it was fired at as great a distance as five feet, it means that a quite tall man would have had to hold the weapon at the level of his own chin—which is absurd."

"Exactly," said the detective. "It might have been fired from a higher level."

"Precisely," said the chief. "Now we do not know whether the girl was walking straight, or whether her body was turned. Suppose it was fired from the opposite side of the road. Allowing a margin of inaccuracy for the way I am holding the umbrella, it is just possible that the shot might have been fired from the top of that wall—which is highly improbable. The assailant would have had to make his way into the garden in broad daylight—and some one would have been sure to see him on the top of the wall. Very well! Watch now while I swing the umbrella round to this side. What do you make of that, Grant?"

"That the shot must have been fired from that first-floor window."

"Which first-floor window?"

"The one over the shoe shop—the one labeled '*Maviste, Milliner.*'"

"I agree with you, Grant," said Sakeman. "The suggestion I have to offer is that you make immediate investigation into what was taking place on the premises of Maviste, Milliner, at the moment when the deed was committed. Good night, Grant."

The chief stopped a passing taxi and left the detective to follow his lead.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PATIENT.

AFTER a troubled night at the Berkeley Hotel, Burton did not turn up at his apartment until noon, when, meeting the nurse in the hall, he made immediate inquiries as to her patient.

"Miss Maines has had a very good night," the nurse told him, "and Doctor Dewar is more than satisfied this morning. It's only a question of the stitches being given time to heal.

"She is sitting up in bed," continued the nurse, "and I think wants to see you, Mr. Burton."

"Do you mind telling her I'm here?" said Burton. The nurse reappeared a moment later and invited him to enter the sick room.

"I think you had better be present if you will," he said awkwardly to the nurse. After all, she was convalescent, he reasoned, and he knew that a great deal of attention was now focused upon the apartment and all that went on in it. He would guard her reputation with the utmost care.

She was lying propped up on her pillows. The part of her that emerged from the coverlet was clothed in a dressing jacket of honey-colored silk and caught the faintest echo of her burnished hair. He wondered vaguely where the dressing jacket had come from. The plait, he observed with intense satisfaction, had disappeared—from which he deduced that she had already recovered sufficiently to have regained that pride of body which was one of her subtle physical charms. There was the faintest hint of color in her cheeks, which gladdened him the more.

She smiled him a welcome, and again he felt an inexplicable awkwardness in her presence—a shyness which reminded him uncomfortably of the days of calf love.

"I'm so glad you've come," she said with quiet friendliness. "There is such a lot that we shall have to arrange. I have been nagging Doctor Dewar to tell me how soon I can be removed. He is horribly cautious."

"It's rather inconsiderate of you to be in such a hurry," he said. "There is no doubt that you are obsessed with the idea that civilization will collapse because the routine of my apartment has been interfered with. I assure you it won't. I want you to stay here for as long as you are comfortable. Abortive attempts to escape will be regarded as adverse criticism of my domestic arrangements."

He spoke thus lightly the while his brain struggled with the task of broaching the subject of his conversation with Cynthia Shaw—no, Bolden. Hang it all, he must try to remember she was now Cynthia Bolden.

Rhoda Maines glanced at the nurse, ostentatiously reading a book at the window. Her eyes went from the nurse to Burton, and again she smiled as each recognized the reason for the nurse's presence.

"A man has no need to consider the conventions," she said. "And as for myself, I live entirely alone, I haven't half a dozen acquaintances all told."

"Among whom, I believe, is numbered Miss Cynthia Shaw?" suggested Burton.

He had seen no reason why he should not mention Cynthia. It was obvious that Rhoda was in full possession of her faculties. Apart from his own personal feelings, it was imperatively necessary that he should discuss matters with her before she was interviewed by the police—and the sooner he made a beginning the better.

She looked at him with bewilderment in her deep, indefinable eyes.

"That's true," she said strangely. "But what an extraordinary coincidence. By what chance do you know that Miss Shaw is on my very limited list of acquaintances?"

The question was embarrassing for Burton. It clearly implied that Rhoda had forgotten her own terror of the previous evening. It raised the alarming problem as to what exactly he would do if she should prove to have forgotten everything.

"She called here yesterday to inquire after your condition," he answered uncomfortably.

"Called here yesterday?" repeated Rhoda. "Miss Cynthia Shaw—called here yesterday? Are you absolutely sure?"

"Absolutely," he answered. "She was in the sitting room with me for about half an hour—while you were actually being operated upon—and she waited to hear the result."

"What time was that?" the girl asked, with an intensity of interest that alarmed Burton.

"The latter part of the afternoon," he answered uneasily. "Between five and six, so far as I can remember."

"But——"

The girl broke off and seemed in the act of explaining her interest.

"You seem rather surprised, but there can be no mistake," he said.

"I am surprised," she admitted, "because, although I am not an intimate friend of Miss Shaw's, I thought she would—would be otherwise engaged yesterday afternoon."

"She had told you of her marriage, of course," Burton said, forcing his voice to polite interest.

Rhoda's eyes flitted away from his.

"Yes—that is, no. I heard that it was going to take place from a mutual friend."

Burton clenched his fists. Her explanation meant little in itself, but it was the first point that dovetailed with Cynthia's own version. There was a short silence between them while he planned the next step. But before he could speak she asked:

"Have you by any chance a morning paper?"

"There's sure to be one about somewhere," he answered, glad to gain time. "I'll go and dig it up."

He left the room, to return a moment later with a copy of a morning paper. As he handed it to her, he thought that she showed a new, almost nervous, eagerness to receive it. This suspicion was confirmed when, a moment later, she said:

"Will you excuse me a minute? I am particularly anxious to read the notice of the wedding of a friend of mine."

Burton nodded, and he was at once filled with misgivings. A wedding of a friend of hers! She had forgotten that in her delirium she had already told him who that friend was. How much more did she know of the events which had happened since she had been fired at? She had already opened the paper. Did she know——

"Oh!"

It was no more than a faint cry, but it told him that she had learned for the first time of Bolden's death.

He started to his feet and stood over her. "Nurse," he called. "Quick! Miss Maines has fainted."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VISIT.

THE nurse hurried forward. Before she could reach the bedside, Rhoda opened her eyes.

"It's all right," she said. "I haven't fainted, but I—have just had a shock, that's all. I don't want anything, thank you, nurse."

Burton marveled at her self-control. In the momentary confusion of thought he swayed between a feeling of intense relief and one equally intense of disappointment. That she had received an emotional shock was beyond all doubt. She was struggling for composure, but her eyelids still quivered.

An emotional shock! It had told him two things. One was that Bolden's death had been a surprise to her—that she had received, then, from the newspaper the first intimation of it. This meant that by no stretch of the imagination could she have contrived the death of Bolden. It also meant that the death of Bolden was an emotional shock. That damnable tale of Cynthia's——

"I'm sorry to have made an exhibition of myself," said the girl with a weak laugh. "But I just saw in the paper the death of an old friend—a friend I made in the West Indies."

That hurt Burton. Why should she consider it necessary to humbug him, he asked himself.

"I know," he said jerkily. "You're referring to James Bolden."

"How did you know?" she asked, her slow, expressive eyes, wide with wonder. "Oh, of course," she added, "you have read the paper yourself. I mentioned I was looking for a wedding. That would have told you."

"It wasn't that," he answered with a shrug. "Bolden was a friend of mine. I was best man at his wedding. I thought you knew. Yesterday—before your operation—you asked me about him." He saw that his words had produced a deep effect—and was glad.

"I—asked—you about him!" she repeated. "Of course, I—I was delirious. I must have been." There was a pause. "What did I ask you?"

"You asked me whether he was wearing his rose," answered Burton deliberately.

"Oh! And you said——"

"That he was."

He waited, keyed to the highest pitch of suspense, for her to speak again. But she lay back on the pillows now, her eyes closed, her lips parted. With a pang of self-reproach he would have found hard to restrain, he told himself that she was not in a fit physical condition for direct questions. He rose with the intention of leaving her, when she opened her eyes.

"That reminds me," she said, with what seemed to him strange inconsequence. "Would you be so kind as to address this envelope correctly for me and have it posted?"

As she spoke, her hand went to the table by her bedside. She handed him a sealed envelope. Burton took it. On it was written: "Driver No. X1093."

"That is the number of a chauffeur—a taximan," she explained, forcing herself to speak evenly. "I loaned him my wrist watch for a special purpose. He was to have returned it to me, but I could not keep the appointment. I value the watch extremely—it was a gift. I have written to ask him to return it. I should be obliged——"

"Certainly," said Burton. He had not the smallest intention of directing the envelope. He would explain the reason for that later. In spite of the fact that she was talking to him calmly about such a trifle as her wrist watch, he knew she was on the verge of hysteria.

He murmured a conventional remark regarding her recovery, and left the room. In the hall he encountered a stranger.

"This is Lieutenant Detective Grant, sir," said Walters, "and he wishes to speak to the lady. He called after you'd gone last night."

Burton started. Then he clutched at his vanishing self-control.

"Just a minute, lieutenant," said Burton. "I don't think Miss Maines is fit to see you. Come in, will you?"

He led the way into his sitting room.

Last night the whirl of his bewilderment had produced one concrete form: He might be baffled by the events of a tragically crowded day and give up their solution in resigned despair, but there were others, equally baffled, who would not give it up—the police. He knew that he must expect police investigation at any moment.

Burton reminded himself of this severely, and allowed himself no wonder at their promptitude. Instead, he must play for time. Somehow or other he must prevent the detective from seeing her. For one thing, she was not fit. For another—she must be warned of her danger.

"I have no desire to put difficulties in your way, lieutenant," he began, "but you will understand that this lady is in my charge. I want you to wait while I telephone Doctor Dewar. We will take his advice on the point of your seeing her."

That would give him a little time, he reasoned. He picked up the receiver

of the telephone and gave the doctor's number.

While the connection was being made, he glanced at the detective.

The detective's eyes were glued to the envelope, which Burton had unconsciously placed by the base of the telephone while he was speaking.

Burton reached out to recover the envelope and place it in his pocket. Before he could do so, Detective Grant dived forward and snatched it.

CHAPTER XVII.

A LETTER.

FOR the moment Burton was stupefied by the action. Panic seized him. He had already resolved that it would be too dangerous even to allow the letter to be posted. And now it was actually in the hands of the police.

"Busy! Shall I call you?" came through the receiver. He replaced the receiver and turned to the detective. "Give me back that letter, please," he demanded curtly.

"I am sorry, Mr. Burton," replied the detective, "but duty compels me to refuse."

"All right," said Burton. "Sit down, please, lieutenant."

Burton turned again to the telephone and gave the number of headquarters. When he got his number, he asked to speak to the chief himself.

"Is that Chief Sakeman? Burton speaking, chief. One of your detectives has just snatched a letter from my desk and refused to give it back to me. He is sitting in my room now. Do you mind dealing with the matter? . . . Thanks very much." He passed the receiver to the detective. "The chief wishes to speak to you," he added grimly.

The detective took the receiver. A brief colloquy ensued at the end of which the detective handed the letter to Burton.

"I am ordered to offer you an apology, Mr. Burton, for my undignified behavior."

"Thank you," said Burton, taking the letter. "And now will you please go. If a member of your force enters my apartment again, it will only be on the authority of a warrant."

The detective shrugged his shoulders. "You will gain nothing by hindering our investigations, Mr. Burton," he said without a trace of anger. Burton made no reply, but held the door open.

As the front door closed behind the detective, Burton exclaimed: "We've gained a few hours, anyhow. Time enough to warn her that she's suspected of the murder of Bolden."

When he left Burton's apartment Detective Grant returned to headquarters, where he went at once to the chief's room.

"You seem to have made a mess of things, Grant," said Sakeman severely. "What happened?"

"I'm very sorry, chief," replied the detective, "but it had to be that or nothing." He related the circumstances in which he had snatched the envelope, and effectively justified his action.

"Hm!" said Sakeman. "Did you have time to read the address?"

"Yes, sir, and memorized it. It was 'Driver No. X1093.'"

"Good," replied the chief, as he wrote the number on a slip of paper. Then, picking up the receiver of the telephone, he spoke to a subordinate and asked him to consult the automobile-number file. A minute or two later he was again writing. As he finished and replaced the receiver, he passed a slip to Grant.

"That name sounds familiar," he remarked. "Didn't you tell me that William Castle was the name of the taxi man on the end of the stand?"

"Yes, sir. I've questioned him, as you know, but couldn't get much out of him."

"Hm! Looks as if he were deliberately lying low. I'll try and get him here this afternoon and question him myself. Leave that. Did you get anything out of the girl?"

"I thought it better not to see her, sir, after what you said on the phone about the dignity of the force. And it did strike me that it would be better to follow up the taxi number first."

The chief nodded reflectively.

"Correct," he said. "Any further news of Maviste, Milliner?"

"Nothing beyond the fact that the place is run by a man called Martin Hall, and that I am seeing him this afternoon at two-thirty."

"Right," said the chief, turning to his desk. It was a sign that the interview was at an end.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN A PAWNSHOP.

ONE of the prosperous pawnbrokers in the populous section of the city, Sidney Goldburg, was sitting in his comfortable office, out of earshot of the disputes and hagglings of the shop, checking the work of his assistants.

Before him on a long metal tray lay an ordered litter of jewelry. Attached to each was a duplicate pledge ticket. It was Goldburg's custom to check the advances made on all articles of jewelry by each assistant. For the most part the jewelry was trashy, and the advances made were correspondingly low.

A glittering exception caught his eye. It was a lady's jeweled wrist watch, and before he had picked it up he could see that the jewels were good specimens, and the workmanship was very fine.

He glanced at the pledge and started as he noticed the amount.

"Twenty dollars!" he exclaimed. "That's carrying a good principle too far. We could have lent a hundred on that and still have played safe."

A code mark on the ticket told him which of his assistants had handled the deal. He called to a boy: "Tell Mr. Barnett I want him as soon as he is disengaged."

A couple of minutes later an alert young Jew knocked and entered the office. "Why did you only lend twenty dollars on this?" he asked, indicating the wrist watch.

"The man left it to me to make an offer, and I always make a low offer," answered Barnett, feeling that that was a safe answer.

"Did the man know the value of it?"

"I don't know. I don't think so."

"You don't think he knew the value of it. That means you think it was pinched?"

"It's not on the police list."

"Let me see. It's on the table over there."

The young man passed Goldburg the printed list which is daily circulated by the police to all jewelers and pawnbrokers, notifying them of stolen property.

"It isn't here," grudgingly admitted Goldburg. "But I don't like it. A hundred would have looked better if any questions were asked. You could get two hundred for that retail, and you wouldn't have to wait for your money. Wait a minute while I look at the works."

Goldburg picked up a watchmaker's glass and pried open the lid to examine the works. "A first-class article," he pronounced. He laid down his glass, then examined the back of the watch. His glance became a stare. "Do you ever read the paper, Barnett?" he asked sarcastically.

"Yes, sir," replied the young man uncomfortably.

"Well, just look at the miniature on the back of this watch."

Barnett took the watch and studied it as directed.

"Yes, I've seen that face before," he

admitted reluctantly. "It was in the papers yesterday and to-day. It's—I believe it's that fellow who fell dead at his wedding in St. John's Church."

"So do I, Barnett," said Goldburg laboriously. "And when two such great brains as yours and mine agree, we are probably right. What are you going to do about it?"

"It doesn't prove that the watch was stolen, and it doesn't prove that we knowingly accepted stolen property," Barnett pointed out.

"So you would do nothing, if I were to ask your advice?" asked Goldburg.

Barnett signified assent.

"But you see I'm not going to ask your advice," said the other. "I'll give you a bit of mine instead. When you're running a business of your own, and you've had one or two pieces of misfortune with the police in quick succession—and when you get a chance like this of proving how anxious you really are to help them, though it may cost you two hundred dollars or more to do so, you'll jump at it. Because, Barnett, by that time, if you work hard here and learn all you can, your license will be worth a great deal more than two hundred dollars. Got that?"

"Yes, sir," said Barnett. "You are going to take it to the police?"

"No, my son. You are going to take it to the police, as soon as you've shut shop this afternoon. Come to me at closing time and I'll give it to you, and you'll take it to headquarters."

Barnett sulkily assented and returned to his duties in the shop. At seven o'clock Barnett was explaining his errand to Detective Grant at headquarters.

"It might possibly be useful, though I can't say anything at present," said Grant, as Barnett finished his account. "I'd like you to leave it with me for a while. Your employer will be willing to do so, I presume, if I give you an official receipt?"

"More than willing," said Barnett unctuously. "Mr. Goldburg is always anxious to help the police all he can."

"I'll look up the name and address, though it's probably a false one," said Grant. "Now you can give me a description of the man who pawned it?"

"He was tall, thickset, and dressed in black. A mechanic out of work, I imagine."

Grant pressed for details, but could obtain nothing satisfactory.

"I couldn't see the color of his hair or the shape of his nose," said Barnett. "But I should know him if I were to see him again, all right."

Grant had to leave it at that, being more than half inclined to the belief that the interview would lead nowhere.

CHAPTER XIX.

FRESHLY OILED.

THE hour following lunch, the slackest hour in the day, as far as the tending of customers was concerned, was the hour in which the employees of Maviste, Milliner, were most on the alert. Invariably at this time Martin Hall would exercise his languid cynicism upon his saleswomen.

"To me," he was saying to a nervous model, "the hat you are trying to wear is a poem, an inspiration, an ideal expressed in gossamer. To you it is a family secret of which you are ashamed and expect every one else to be. I——"

He broke off as a stalwart man, who did not look in the least like a customer, strode across the showroom and presented his card. Hall looked at the card and then at the detective.

"Certainly! Come inside," said Hall, as he led Grant into the room that faced on Prospect Street.

"Now I come to think of it," said Hall, as he closed the door, "the housekeeper reported the fact that you were making inquiries about me last night.

Don't tell me that I have been profiteering. If you knew the strain——"

"It's nothing of that kind, Mr. Hall. I simply want permission to examine your premises, make a few measurements, and ask one or two questions."

"Examine the premises!" exclaimed Hall. "That sounds suspicious. Suppose we begin with the questions."

"Very well," said the detective. "This room is your private office, I take it." Hall nodded. "Were you in it at —half past ten yesterday morning?"

For a moment Hall hesitated, then: "No, but how did you guess?"

"Was any one in this room at the time?"

Again Hall hesitated. There was no reason why he should not give a truthful answer, and yet——

"Look here, this is a rather one-sided affair," he exclaimed. "I think it's up to you to tell me the object of your visit."

It is a maxim in the police force that it is in the long run impossible to conceal the full nature of an official inquiry, for which reason Grant answered: "At that time yesterday a woman was shot under the window of this room. Her assailant was apparently seen by no one. Naturally we are making the fullest inquiries from the neighboring buildings. That is why I want to know who was in this room at ten-thirty yesterday morning."

"Miss Cynthia Shaw," replied Hall readily. "She was about to be married at St. John's—her bridegroom died in church—no doubt you read about it in the papers. She had trouble with her wedding dress at the last moment and arranged to dress here. That is all."

"Thank you, Mr. Hall," said Grant, making a note. "The lady was attended by her maid, I presume?"

"Miss Shaw does not possess a maid," said Hall. "I have often told her——"

"Did Miss Shaw put on her wedding dress by herself?" asked the detective in the tone of one scoring a point.

"My dear sir, that comes of interrupting me," said Hall. "A fitter came with her from the modiste's. They turned up here together at about ten o'clock."

"What time did Miss Shaw leave?"

"About half past eleven, as nearly as I can remember."

There was a moment's silence while the detective weighed the hours.

"So Miss Shaw was in this room from about ten to eleven-thirty with the fitter? The fitter did not leave the room till Miss Shaw did?"

"They weren't actually together the whole time," replied Hall patiently. "At a certain stage in the proceedings Miss Shaw thought she would like another sprig of orange blossoms in her wreath, and the fitter left the room to get it from the modiste's establishment."

"How long was the fitter away?"

"About twenty minutes, I should think."

"Miss Shaw, then, was alone in this room for some twenty minutes. When did this period of twenty minutes begin? That is to say, what time did the fitter leave this room?"

"As nearly as possible," replied Hall slowly, "she must have left this room at ten-thirty."

The drawl had left his voice as he spoke the last words. His eyes met those of the detective. Grant was conscious of a sudden tension between them.

"And now, Mr. Hall, if you don't mind," said Grant, "I would like to examine this room."

"By all means," said Hall with apparent indifference.

For several minutes the detective worked in silence, surveying, measuring, taking notes. The window box, with its clustering geraniums, received his special attention.

Returning to the interior of the room, Hall watching his movements curiously, Grant stopped opposite a long, narrow oak chest of Dutch design.

"What is this?" he asked.

"It belongs to Miss Shaw," replied Hall, "and contains sketches and samples. I'd better explain," he added, "that this business belonged to Miss Shaw before her marriage. She worked in this room."

Grant's attention remained concentrated on the chest

"Would you mind opening it for me, Mr. Hall?" he asked.

"Good Heavens, you can't expect me to do that!" exclaimed Hall. "It's her private property. Besides, what object can there be. You don't imagine she's guilty of shooting that girl, do you?"

"It is my business, Mr. Hall, to suspect everybody," replied the detective. "We are bound to make the fullest possible investigations. As a friend of Miss Shaw's you may save her a great deal of unpleasantness by giving us every assistance. The more help we get, the sooner our work is ended."

"It's locked, and I haven't the key," objected Hall.

For answer the detective produced a bunch of skeleton keys and without further parley tackled the lock. A minute later the lid of the chest was open, Hall deeming it futile to offer further protest.

A litter of things met the detective's eyes. With elaborate carefulness he began to turn them over, his hand groping into the depth of the chest. Suddenly he stopped as if he had lighted on something. The next moment he carefully lifted from the bottom of the chest a light rifle and held it significantly before him.

To the detective's surprise Hall laughed loudly.

"A clew to the murder, detective!" he exclaimed sarcastically. "Only it doesn't count for very much when you bear in mind the fact that Miss Shaw makes a hobby of rifle shooting. Her mantelpiece, I am told, is littered with her trophies."

Grant opened the breach of the rifle. From his vest pocket he took a cast of the bullet that had been extracted from the girl. The bullet fitted the bore. He replaced the cast in his pocket and turned toward the window.

Then, reversing the rifle, he placed his thumb in the breach to act as a reflector and looked down the barrel.

"This barrel has been oiled—pretty recently, too, by the look of it!" he exclaimed. "Oiled in a hurry, too, judging by the uneven distribution."

"I can see what you're driving at," said Hall, a faint flush of anger creeping to his cheeks. "You think Miss Shaw potted the girl in the street, while the fitter was out of the room, and then oiled the barrel to destroy proof of the rifle having been fired. These deductive logic stunts are a bit dangerous, lieutenant."

Grant was down on his knees, groping in the chest.

"Here's the oil, anyway," he said, holding up a bottle. "And here's the cleaner"—dangling a wire on one end of which was a piece of oily rag.

"And you seriously imagine," said Hall, "that a girl would oil a rifle while her movements were hampered by a wedding dress."

"She may not have been wearing her wedding dress at the time."

"I know she was. She wouldn't have discovered that she wanted another spray of orange blossoms until she had her veil on. And you don't put the veil on before you put on the dress. She had her dress on, all right. And, if she oiled that rifle, you can bet your last nickel there'll be spatters of oil about it, somewhere."

"Very possibly," said the detective, smiling with satisfaction. "I am much

obliged to you for the suggestion and shall certainly follow it up, as soon as I have taken this rifle and oil bottle back to headquarters."

Cynthia, careful to preserve the gifts with which nature had endowed her, was taking a nap in her room after lunch, when the telephone bell rang.

"Hello!" she answered languidly. "Yes, I'm speaing. That's you, isn't it, Martin?"

"Listen, Cynthia," came the voice of Martin Hall. "A detective has just been here, nosing among your things. I think he's going from here to your house to inspect your wedding dress."

"What for?"

"I think he's looking for oil stains. What did you say?"

Cynthia had said nothing. To cover her involuntary exclamation she added: "He'll be disappointed. But I can give him a coffee stain, if that's any use to him. I spilled coffee on it as soon as I got home."

"Good," said Hall with a laugh. "You'll blight his young career. In revenge he'll probably pinch the dress and submit it to chemical analysis. They've got suspicious minds, these detectives."

"Thanks, Martin," said Cynthia, and replaced the receiver. She slipped from the bed and opened the wardrobe where hung the wedding dress. She took up the hem and stared at the coffee stain.

"Chemical analysis!" she repeated. "What on earth am I to do?"

CHAPTER XX.

THE TEMPTRESS.

AS he replaced the receiver Martin Hall stared at himself in the massive mirror that overhung his desk.

"You've done a mighty foolish thing!" he said to himself. "You'll get your fingers burned if you aren't careful. Of what precise use is a beautiful woman when you are both in the jug?"

He laughed uneasily and passed into the show room. The afternoon stream of customers was beginning. The high-pitched, ingratiating voices of his saleswomen jarred on his nerves, but he was unwilling to return to the comparative silence of his room.

He went upstairs and for ten minutes watched the "hands" in the main workroom. He contented himself with a word or two of superfluous criticism, and then ascended to the third floor, where he had two smaller workrooms, one of which he found empty.

As he returned to the level of the first floor, he saw Cynthia coming up, carrying a light suit case.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, and his voice asked an anxious question.

"Has he gone?" she demanded.

"Yes," he answered, casting an anxious glance at a customer on the staircase, within earshot. "You'd better come in."

He relieved her of the suit case and followed her through the show room into the room beyond, where he closed the door with the air of a conspirator.

"You look bad, Martin! What have the police been saying to frighten you?" she said with that lazy scornfulness which was one of her most effective ways of getting what she wanted.

"A detective has been here trying to prove that, while you were putting on your wedding dress, you potted a girl out of the window with your rifle. He's taken the gun away. He saw that the barrel had been oiled. When I told him that you were in your wedding dress at the time when the girl was shot, and you couldn't very well have oiled the rifle without running the risk of bespattering your dress, he decided to call on you in the hope of finding oil stains on your wedding dress. What have you got in this bag?"

"A wedding dress with a stain," replied Cynthia. "I'm going to take one of your cigarettes."

"Good Heavens!" he exclaimed. "What—why——"

"I want you to fix it for me," replied Cynthia, ignoring his agitation. "The stain is on the hem. I poured some coffee over it, but a chemist will be able to see through that. It will be necessary to cut the hem right off—all the way round—and turn the rough edge up to make a new hem. It's a simple tailoring job—it oughtn't to take you more than a couple of hours. I know it's some time since you gave up tailoring, but in this case you have only to pass the critical eye of headquarters."

Martin Hall clutched the back of a chair to steady himself. "Great Cæsar, Cynthia!" he said hoarsely. "Do you mean to say it's true? Can you sit there and tell me that you actually tried to kill a person—and on your wedding day?"

"The best of men are horribly conventional-minded," said Cynthia languidly.

"Conventional-minded be hanged! You are confessing to attempted murder."

"I am not," said Cynthia, "but we won't argue about it. There is only one thing to be decided, Martin. Are you going to fix that dress for me?"

Martin Hall looked at her with mingled horror and fascination. Her calmly cynical assumption that he would risk his own liberty by helping her repelled him.

"I don't know what you've been doing, and I don't care," he said desperately. "But you know perfectly well the police are on your track. It's unfair of you to come here under the circumstances and ask me to run my neck into the noose."

"Who's running necks in nooses?" demanded Cynthia scornfully. "Don't be melodramatic, Martin. It simply comes to this. I've got into a mess—is it worth your while to get me out?"

"That's where you're so unscrupulous, Cynthia," said Hall plaintively. "How can it be worth my while to take such an appalling risk?"

For a moment Cynthia was silent, and then: "There's a lot of money coming to me under the marriage settlement," she said quietly.

"I see!" said the other bitterly. "You're going to pay me for services rendered?"

"Of course I am!" replied Cynthia. She arose from her chair and came toward him. "Money will be—part of the payment," she said. She was standing now within a few inches of him. "Bolden is dead," she said in a voice that was little above a whisper. "Have you forgotten that I am free?"

He made a sudden movement as if to take her in his arms, but she eluded him.

"That will be part of the balance," she added.

He would have pursued her, but his foot touched the suit case which contained the wedding dress. He stooped and picked it up.

"Come along," he said thickly. "There's a room at the top of the house. I shall probably want your help."

CHAPTER XXI.

MATCHED WITS.

AS soon as he left Hall's establishment Detective Grant stepped into the nearest telephone booth, after handing the rifle to a plain-clothes man on duty outside. He rang up and asked to speak to one Simpkins.

"That you, Simpkins? Take a taxi to 16 Maple Avenue. I shall be inside when you arrive. Don't come in. Wait outside until I call you."

Grant waited to hear his instructions repeated and then hung up the receiver. Then he himself drove to the Shaw's house.

The butler found Grant difficult. He was certainly not, like the Shaws, on

the fringe of fashionable society. Nevertheless, his accent and slightly apologetic smile were faultless, as he inquired for Miss Shaw—or rather he should say, Mrs. Bolden. He had, moreover, that air of expecting people to do of their own free will what he asked, which to Marples was the hallmark of gentility.

"Mrs. Bolden is not at home, sir."

"She will be to me," said the detective confidently. "My name is Grant." On the way he had decided that his official card would be more of a hindrance than a help.

"But Miss Shaw—Mrs. Bolden has left the house, sir—some ten minutes ago."

"That's unfortunate," said Grant ruefully and asked for Mr. Shaw, instead. He was invited to enter.

In the hall the butler was just hesitating whether to make it the drawing-room or not, when Grant got him out of his difficulty.

"I have come on a business matter. The morning room, please," he said.

"Thank you, sir," said the butler.

Shaw kept him waiting. His irritation made his greeting more curt than he had intended.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Shaw."

"Good afternoon, good afternoon, my dear fellow," said Shaw, doing "the amiable gentleman." He had sized up Grant as a good subject to patronize. "Sit down, won't you? Have a cigarette. It's the wrong time of day to offer a guest a drink—but what do you say, eh?"

"No, thanks," replied Grant. "I never drink during business hours."

"An excellent rule, my dear fellow, excellent," said Shaw. "Wish I'd had as much sense when I was your age. I might have saved myself from many financial follies, follies which—I say it with shame, my dear fellow—have been visited upon my innocent wife and daughter."

"Quite right," said Grant. "I called with the object of seeing your daughter, but, as I understand that she is out, I hoped that you would be able to help me."

"Oh, indeed!" Shaw considered the advisability of changing his tactics. "I am afraid I shall be of little use," he said guardedly. "The fact is—I regret to say it—my daughter has inherited my own financial obtuseness and I have had to disclaim responsibility for her debts."

"I am not concerned with the lady's debts, Mr. Shaw," said Grant.

"Then what——"

"To be precise, Mr. Shaw, I wish to see her wedding dress."

"But it is not hers to dispose of," said Shaw sharply. "I bought it—I paid for it in hard cash."

Grant bit his lip. To be taken for the buyer of a cast-off-clothes shop hurt his pride. A sarcastic retort trembled on his lips, but was checked by professional zeal, as he perceived a way of using the unconscious insult.

"Well, in a matter like this strict legal ownership scarcely concerns me," he said airily. "I am indifferent whether I deal with you or the lady, provided I can see the dress."

Mr. Shaw was intensely relieved. Nevertheless, in spite of his protestations about his financial obtuseness, he was too good a business man to show eagerness.

"Before we proceed further," he said, "what do you think of offering? Come now—I don't want a definite figure—but what roughly is your idea?"

Grant stood on ticklish ground. He had not the remotest idea of the cost of a fashionable wedding dress, but knew vaguely that it was expensive.

"That, of course, depends," he said cautiously. "I shouldn't like to mention any figure until I had seen the dress. It may have been soiled in the wearing."

Shaw detected a note of eagerness in the other's voice and, acute old haggler that he was, took immediate advantage of it.

"I am not one to haggle and dispute over a trifling matter like this," he said in his most convincing and aristocratic voice. "I will not pretend to deny that the dress will show signs of having been worn—to your expert eye."

Grant was feeling his way warily.

"That goes without saying," he said vaguely. Then:

"I know the dress has been worn, of course. What I want to know is whether it has been soiled. I shall have to examine it minutely. The slightest contact is apt to stain a wedding dress of that texture."

Shaw hesitated. The other had spoken of a minute examination. He perceived a line of argument by which he might jolt his visitor into paying a higher price than he had intended.

"I'm not asking you to buy a pig in a poke," he said with elaborate frankness. "Such defects as there are in the dress I will make a point of indicating myself. I had intended to call your attention to a very minute stain on the hem of the train—so minute that you might well miss it in your examination. But, if you think that the price is going to suffer substantially on that account, I will save time by telling you that you are mistaken. You know as well as I that a very simple chemical process——"

"That depends entirely on the nature of the stain," said Grant carefully.

"In this case it happens to be a tiny oil stain," said Shaw. "And oil, as you know, can easily be removed with a solution of——"

"Hadn't you better let me see the dress, Mr. Shaw?"

"Certainly, if by naming an approximate figure you can give me an assurance that you really mean business."

"A hundred dollars," said Grant at random, thinking, as he said it, that it would be a perfectly justifiable expense.

Shaw tried to smother his gratification. "A mere fraction of what it cost," he said loftily. "But I suppose you people always buy a thing for a tenth of its value, so I must not consider your offer an unfair one. If you will sit down for a couple of minutes I'll bring the dress."

Grant was wholly willing to sit down. He sat mentally shaking hands with himself. In reporting the matter to the chief, he would make quite a bright little story of his own acceptance of the rôle of cast-off-clothes man.

The two minutes were elongated into five, and he was beginning to grow restless when Shaw reappeared.

"It's most provoking," he exclaimed. The dress is not there. My daughter must have taken it with her when she went out this afternoon. I know it was there this morning. I saw it with my own eyes."

"Perhaps we are not too late to make a deal," said Grant meaningly. "Do you know where your daughter has gone?"

"No, I don't," said Shaw. "But I might be able to find out," he added. With his hand on the bell button he hesitated. "Look here, if you get in touch with my daughter, you can ask her to show you the dress, and there her concern in the matter ends. She has no authority to sell it to you. In law it is my dress. I paid for it."

If he had said that he intended to pay for it, if and when he were ever able to do so, his words would have been more literally true. But this was no affair of Grant's.

"If I like the dress, I will make you an offer by mail, Mr. Shaw," he said, and the latter nodded approvingly and touched the bell button.

"Did my daughter say where she was going?" he asked when the butler entered.

"No, Mr. Shaw, but I happen to

know it was somewhere in the vicinity of Prospect Street, as I was instructed to call a taxi for Mrs. Bolden, and I heard her say something to the driver about that section."

"Thank you, Marples. That will do," said Shaw. Turning to the detective, he said: "If my daughter was going to Prospect Street, I can tell you where she has gone. It's dollars to doughnuts that you'll find her at Number Fifty-two Prospect Street, second floor—Maviste, Milliner—if you're quick."

"Thanks," said Grant. "I'll go there at once. Good afternoon, Mr. Shaw."

"Don't forget, my dear fellow," said Shaw, shaking hands effusively, "I'm the one to write to. I'm the only one who can give you a valid receipt for your check."

Outside the house Grant beckoned to Simpkins.

"You come on in the next act, Simpkins," he said. "I want a taxi." He gave the driver the Prospect Street address.

To be continued in next week's issue of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE.

GUARDING PRISONERS IN URAGUAY

FAR-AWAY Uraguay, South America, has a penal system that is more progressive than those of many northern countries. Uraguay does not have capital punishment. For minor crimes offenders are imprisoned in the local jails of the nineteen departments of Uraguay; for murder and other major crimes offenders are sent to the model prison at Montevideo.

This prison is on the River Platte and is about two miles from Montevideo. A stone wall surrounds the prison building, which is a hollow rectangle of stone and steel sixty feet high, and has a wing at either end. There are four tiers of cells, the main building and wings containing three hundred and eighty-four cells, and each cell is ten feet long by seven feet wide; the floors are of cement and the walls of tile.

A hammock fastened to hooks on the wall, a wash stand, a table, and a rack for books is the equipment of each cell. The cells are lighted by electricity. Ventilation is secured by windows opening into the outer and the inner courts of the prison. The windows on the outer court are kept open except in stormy weather, and when it is very warm a prisoner may secure more air by pressing a button which releases a little red flag to let the guards know what he wants. Then the emergency window in his door is opened.

Prisoners dine in their cells. The meals are placed by attendants upon a shelf attached to the cell door, and the food is removed by the prisoner through the emergency window. Porcelain plates and cups, and wooden forks and spoons, are used in serving the inmates' food. If a prisoner is ill he presses a bell in his cell, which lights a red lamp and sets a flag signal outside his door.

At the intersection of the main building with the wings there is a station for the head keeper. It is surrounded with iron bars, and here are installed the mechanical devices that control the operation of the prison cells. The head keeper is in constant contact with every attendant in the prison buildings and with the guard on the prison wall and the reserve guard in the outer court between the buildings and the wall. One of the levers in the control station controls a device which drops steel bars through spaces in the corridor of the four tiers of cells and divides each floor into three separate compartments. The purpose of this contrivance is to quell any attempt at a concerted crush-out, but it has never been found necessary to use it. In the thirteen years the prison has been in operation no one has escaped from it, and only one attempt at escape has been made.

Taxi No. 13

by John Dent Kirkwood

WHEN Richard Alwyn awoke to consciousness, he was lying flat upon his back on the sopping wet grass in the park. The rain which bathed his face with refreshing coolness had reduced the starched front of his dress shirt to a limp rag. He stared up into space as dark and blank as his own mind. Recollection, exasperatingly elusive, ebbed and flowed on an uncertain tide of memory.

He had gone to laugh at the eccentricities of a popular comedian in the latest review. Then he had visited his club. There he had met some fellows who had induced him to accompany them to a house where he had gambled and drank more whiskies and sodas than were good for him.

Where was that house located? And who were those fellows?

And where had he been since he left them?

For the life of him he could not remember!

Then he rocked on his feet. He felt giddy and sick. He pressed an unsteady hand to his head. Inside, a trip-hammer seemed to be beating a tattoo. When he withdrew his hand the palm was wet. He looked dazedly at the ugly dark stain on it. "Must have knocked my head when I fell," he mused weakly. "A stone or something."

On his right lay a sheet of turgid black water. How on earth did he happen to be here, in the opposite direction to which he had intended to go?

He glanced at his luminous wrist-watch. Two-forty a. m.

A sense of chill brought realization that his thin dress suit was not adequate protection against the inclemency of the night. Stooping, he retrieved from the mud an overcoat on which he had been standing as if it were a doormat. He stared at it stupidly. This coarse, shapeless garment was not the smart black evening coat an expensive tailor had made for him.

In place of his immaculate silk hat he found a flat-crowned cap with a patent-leather vizor.

"Evidently some of the boys have been putting over a little joke on me," and he grinned good-naturedly. He tried hard to see wherein the joke lay, but failed miserably. It was all very bewildering, and when he tried to think his head ached.

Who were those fellows anyway? He would know soon enough, he told himself. He struggled into the coat. If not what a sartorial exquisite such as he would have esteemed a fit, it served at least to protect him from the rain. The cap, on the other hand, was too large for him by several sizes. To avoid the total eclipse of his eyesight he was forced to wear it tilted over one ear, which gave a rakish effect.

Proceeding in what he believed to be the right direction, he came upon a taxi-cab, apparently deserted, standing in the center of the driveway. The electric headlights and the overhead lamp were switched off. The cab was in darkness.

After walking round the derelict, and having assured himself that nothing was to be seen through the rain-blurred glass, he opened the door.

An odor pungent yet not unpleasant assailed his nostrils. It was an odor vaguely familiar, but he could not just place it.

In the farther corner a woman, young and beautiful, reclined against the cushions. An osprey in her hair stirred in the draft; her light wrap, negligently draped, displayed perfect shoulders rising white above her low-cut evening gown. She met Richard Alwyn's stare with cold, dispassionate fixity.

He raised his cap, his teeth flashing in a smile. "Your chauffeur appears to have deserted you," he addressed her urbanely. "Fortunately, among my few accomplishments I number the ability to drive a car. If you will give me your address, I shall be delighted to drive you home."

She preserved frigid silence. Possibly she mistook him for a would-be "masher," thought Alwyn, recollecting ruefully the figure he must cut in his makeshift coat and cap. Hence her hauteur.

With an idea of disillusioning her, he began: "Things are not always what they seem. For example, I might be mistaken at first glance for——" He stopped abruptly, took his glasses from his silk vest, and peered closer.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "It's Milly—Milly Stuyvesant!"

As he spoke, the woman's head dropped on her shoulder with a sudden ghastly jerk; her whole body sagged, inert.

Half inside the cab, he stared aghast.

"G-g-good Heavens!" he gasped. "She—she's d-d-dead!"

II.

Detective Sergeant Sharps, of headquarters, expectantly faced the inspector in charge of the detective bureau, across the wide mahogany writing table with its neat little piles of systematically arranged papers.

"The telephone clerk," the inspector informed him, "has just registered a call that a woman—apparently a lady—has been found dead in a taxicab in the park. The discovery was made by a man described as"—the inspector consulted the telephone report-slip on his blotting-pad—" 'a drunken dude in evening dress, wearing a taxi-driver's coat and cap, who looks as if he had been through a rough-house in which some one had mopped the ground with him.' "

"The taxicab was abandoned by its regular driver?" Sharpe inquired.

The inspector nodded. "And this apparent drunk, when he reported the discovery, was wearing what might have been the driver's coat and cap," he supplemented, following what he believed to be Sharpe's line of thought.

"Hm!" The detective stroked his clean-shaven chin. He was a gaunt young man of about thirty, with a long, shrewd head, thick graying hair close-cropped, and deep-set, thoughtful eyes. His well-tailored blue serge suit, black silk knitted tie, and smart shoes, suggested any other profession than that of the police officer.

After a moment's silence the inspector straightened suddenly in his revolving chair. "Well, that's all the information I can give you," he said brusquely. "The rest is up to you. Pick what men you will require. You will work as usual, with a free hand."

Dawn was breaking, gray and sullen, when the big, high-powered police car bearing Detective Sergeant Sharpe, an expert photographer, and two stolid plain-clothes men were met by the patrolman who reported the crime, and Richard Alwyn.

By now the rain had ceased, but heavy black storm-clouds chased in endless procession across the lowering sky, and there was a constant drip-drip from water-laden branches.

The patrolman, acting as guide,

mounted the footboard. A place was made for Alwyn inside the car. He sat squeezed uncomfortably between the bulky forms of the plain-clothes men. It was Sharpe's invariable custom to interrogate no witness until he had examined all the material evidence connected with a case, and they proceeded in silence to the scene of the tragedy.

For fully twenty minutes, while his subordinates stood respectfully aloof, the detective conducted his investigation with the greatest concentration.

First he examined the footprints clearly defined in the mud alongside the taxicab.

Opposite the driver's seat two prints with the toes sharply indented showed that the man driving had jumped to the ground, alighting on both feet simultaneously. A single stride had taken him to the door. Here a markedly deep indentation made by forceful pressure of the right toe testified that he had entered the cab with a sudden spring.

Obviously the crime—if there had been a crime—had been committed by the man who drove the taxicab—and that man was not the regular chauffeur. The footprints had been made by a light-soled shoe with a pointed toe; not a shoe such as would be worn by an ordinary taxi driver!

A line of prints led from the cab door directly across the sidewalk to the strip of close-cropped grass bordering the avenue. Evidently the criminal had planned to make his get-away over the short grass, on which his feet would leave no impression.

It was impossible, therefore, to trace the direction in which he had escaped after having committed the crime.

Sharpe knitted his brows in perplexity. "I've got a clever man against me," he told himself.

Picking up a third line of footprints —Alwyn's—he followed them right round the taxicab and came to a halt, with them, before the door.

He opened the door and was about to enter, when he noticed the same pervading odor, now fainter and more elusive, which had puzzled Alwyn. For a moment he stood sniffing it, tense and alert as a pointer scenting game.

"It's murder!" he pronounced succinctly.

He studied the position of the body; examined it for marks of violence, but could find none.

There was no disarrangement of the clothing to suggest that there had been a struggle; which fact, it was evident from the deepening frown on his brow, impressed him profoundly. Of a sudden he stooped and picked up a pair of nose glasses from the floor.

He explored the interior of the cab with painstaking thoroughness, even to searching underneath the seats by the light of a pocket electric torch, but found nothing more.

Afterward when the body had been photographed in order that a permanent record of the exact position in which it had been found might be filed, the medical examiner gave out his report.

"Death resulted from the administration—injudiciously or feloniously—of chloroform," he told Sharpe. "Chloroform first depresses the brain centers of thought and conscious action, then the lower centers concerned with the involuntary action of breathing and of the heart muscle. In this case, either from accident, ignorance, or criminal intention, the depression was carried to the second degree, with the result that the lower centers were paralyzed and death ensued. The chloroform was administered either too long or in an overdose."

Sharpe nodded. He was satisfied; the doctor's report confirmed exactly the opinion he had already formed. There would be an autopsy later, he knew; but he did not think it would furnish any further information likely to help him with his case.

"As near as you can judge, doctor, how long has she been dead?" he asked.

"Four hours, perhaps—certainly not more," the doctor estimated, after deliberation.

Sharpe calculated rapidly. "That places the time when the murder was committed at, roughly, half an hour after midnight."

The doctor blinked inquiringly behind round horn-rimmed spectacles. He was a gray little man of uncertain age. Head on one side, legs apart, hands tucked under his coat tails, he had the air of a Solomon and very knowing old owl. And like the owl, he was inquisitive.

"Well, sergeant," he ventured tentatively, "what do you make of this affair? Obviously the motive was not robbery. The lady is wearing valuable jewelry—pendant, bracelets, rings, earrings—which have not been touched."

Sharpe smiled enigmatically; he was not to be drawn out. "Both her shoes are missing," he answered cryptically.

III.

Disheveled, his clothes rain-sodden and mud-stained, his pallid face caked with dried mud, Richard Alwyn presented indeed a woeful appearance quite in keeping with the reported description of him.

At Detective Sergeant Sharpe's request he recounted how he had happened upon the abandoned taxicab and found the dead woman inside. Sharpe listened in noncommital silence, watchful for a chance contradiction on which he might challenge his statement.

While Alwyn was still speaking, Sharpe absently produced the nose glasses he had found on the floor of the taxicab.

"My glasses!" exclaimed Alywn, suddenly interrupting his recital. "Those are my glasses. I must have dropped them in my excitement."

Sharpe, still absently, returned the glasses to his pocket; he did not appear to have heard Alywn's remark. Nevertheless his eyes registered a momentary gleam of satisfaction.

"You know the dead woman?" Sharpe's smooth, careless tone seemed to suggest that Alwyn did know her rather than to inquire whether he knew her.

"She's a Mrs. Millicent Stuyvesant, who lived at eight Oak Street. She is a widow and was seen rather frequently with gay after-dinner parties at the best restaurants—and others not so favorably known. Mystery has seemed to surround her, but I've heard nothing definite against her. I have known her about six months."

But Sharpe was, apparently, paying little attention; he stared frowningly at the crumpled front of Alywn's dress shirt, visible beneath his unbuttoned overcoat. "Perhaps you will explain," he requested, 'how you came to be masquerading as a taxi driver and wandering in a deserted part of the park at three a. m. on an extremely wet and stormy morning?"

Alwyn floundered helplessly in a morass of explanatory confusion. The harder he tried to explain, the deeper he sank. The detective expressed himself frankly incredulous.

"You expect me to believe that you have no recollection of what happened after you parted with your friends on leaving this gambling house you speak of, until you woke up lying on the grass in the park?"

"It's the truth, nevertheless," Alywn protested, "whether you believe it or not."

There was silence for a moment; then Richard spoke again. Rather ashamedly he confessed: "I'm afraid I had just a little drop too much last night."

"Come now," said Sharpe, not unkindly, "can't you tell me the names of those men you say you were with?"

"No—I'll be hanged if I can!" And Alwyn laughed. This unaccountable vagary of his memory, though it had got him into trouble, tickled his rather simple sense of humor.

But Sharpe failed to see where the laugh came in, and said so bluntly. "It is a situation which may have serious consequences for you," he pointed out.

Alywn gaped at him in shocked amazement. The idea that suspicion might focus on himself was to him like a great light breaking through utter darkness; it dazzled his mental vision into momentary blindness. Then, as there dawned on him the full horror of the crime of which he might be accused, he gasped:

"G-g-good Heavens, man! Surely you don't think I killed Milly Stuyvesant!"

Sharpe shrugged his shoulders. "That I am not sure of—yet."

Alywn forced himself to be calm. Deliberately he tested, link by link, the chain of evidence circumstance had forged against him. The consistent strength of it appalled him. How could he hope to prove his innocence? The wild, improbable story that was his sole defense would be accounted as nothing but the subterfuge of a desperate man; no jury would believe it. He would be convicted, and then—a shameful death!

The horror of the thought sent a thrill of fear like ice-cold water shooting down his spine.

"What in Heaven's name is this!" he exclaimed suddenly. From a pocket of the overcoat which had contributed so materially to his tragic predicament he drew forth a glass vial, half filled with a colorless liquid, and a cloth pad that felt wet and clammy to the touch.

At once he was acutely conscious of the same pungent yet soothing odor which had assailed his nostrils when he opened the door of the abandoned taxicab and found poor Milly Stuyvesant's body.

"Chloroform!" exclaimed Sharpe, sniffing. "I'll take charge of that rag and bottles!"

IV.

It was already evening, gray, chill and cheerless, when Detective Sergeant Sharpe returned to headquarters. He had spent the entire day in patient and indefatigable research, with no rest save for the few moments he had sat down at midday to a hastily snatched restaurant lunch. But such was the esteem in which he held his profession that he accounted such physical discomforts as nothing.

He found McCarthy, one of his two plain-clothes assistants, waiting to report on the particular investigation to which he had detailed him. The second plain-clothes man, Detective Henderson, he had left in charge at Mrs. Stuyvesant's apartment, which he had taken possession of and searched, but without finding anything having apparent bearing on the mystery of her tragic death.

Tired though he was, both in body and in spirit, he gave McCarthy immediate audience.

"Well," he demanded brusquely, "did you find what you were to look for?"

McCarthy deposited on the detective's desk a pair of brocaded white satin evening slippers. One was clean, dry, undamaged; the other water-sodden and stained with mud.

"Had to fish the dirty one from the lake," McCarthy explained, half apologetically. "That accounts for the condition it is in. I found the other stuck in a bush on the very edge of the lake, directly opposite where the taxicab was discovered. Both shoes were weighted with stones jammed inside the toes. Evidently whoever removed them from the murdered woman's feet had meant to sink them in the water, where they would have been effectually hidden, but misjudged the throw in the darkness,

and one of them stuck in a bush. The shoe fixed in the bush was a sure pointer to me where I would have to drag for its neighbor."

"Good business, McCarthy; you have done well," Sharpe commended him warmly, then dismissed the officer with a nod. Already he was under the overhead electric, examining the shoes with an eagerness almost feverish.

The inspector who had intrusted the unraveling of the taxicab murder mystery to Sharpe was again on night duty. Sharpe hastened to his office.

"I have traced the ownership of the taxicab," he reported.

The inspector was instantly alert. "It belongs to the Diadem Auto Hiring Company. You might file an offical admission of their claim. Of course the cab cannot be returned to them until the case is settled.

"Then you have found the chauffeur?" the inspector queried.

Sharpe nodded. "I found him at the garage, in heated altercation with the manager regarding the loss of his cab. His story was that last night about eleven-thirty a man accosted him and offered him fifty dollars for the use of his car for half an hour. The man told him that he wanted the car to drive a friend, and led him to believe there was a practical joke involved. The chauffeur was tempted by the prospect of so much money. Being a 'sport,' as he himself expressed it, he agreed. He drove the man into a deserted side street, where the two exchanged coats and headgear. Then, attired in the chauffeur's coat and cap, the man took possession of the car and drove off. It was arranged that the taxicab should be returned to the chauffeur at the same spot within half an hour. But the chauffeur went to some place where he knew booze could be obtained, to celebrate his unexpected windfall of fifty dollars. He got drunk, he confessed, and forgot all about his car and the arrangement for its return until he awoke in bed late this morning."

"And what description did the chauffeur give of this man who bribed him for the use of his car?" the inspector asked.

"He described him as a man of medium height and build, about forty years of age, with reddish-brown hair and Vandyke beard. But that leads us nowhere. Probably the man wore a wig, his beard was false, and he was otherwise disguised."

The inspector did not dispute this; he saw the force of Sharpe's opinion; indeed it coincided with his own. Nevertheless he persisted. "And what of the coat and hat the man left in the chauffeur's possession when he exchanged them for those of the chauffeur? Surely the man's coat and hat offer some clew whereby he might be traced?"

Sharpe made a quick gesture of denial. "I examined both the coat and hat—a black evening coat and silk hat. There was nothing in the pockets of the coat, the tag bearing the tailor's name had been cut away—and cut quite recently. Same with the hat; the lining on which would be printed the name and address of the outfitter from whom it was purchased, had been removed."

For several minutes the two police officials were silent, each reviewing the baffling problem from his own particular viewpoint. Presently the inspector inquired:

"Have you ascertained where Mrs. Stuyvesant passed yesterday evening? Where she was coming from in the taxicab in which she was murdered?"

Sharpe's reply was a counter question. "Have you heard of Silas P. Cheyne, of Cedar Lane?"

"The millionaire diamond collector?" the inspector supplemented, not a little perplexed by the unexpected turn of the conversation.

"The same," and Sharpe nodded. "Cheyne is, as you say, a collector of diamonds and other precious stones. Particularly stones to which an historic interest is attached. Fortunately for him, he has the money to indulge his rather expensive whim. For some months past, as you are aware, smugglers have been disposing of valuable jewels from Europe in this part of the country. Among these jewels was the famous Kransiloff diamond, a stone of moderate size, but valued highly on account of its brilliancy. This diamond was bought by Cheyne at a cost of five hundred thousand dollars—a comfortable fortune.

"Yesterday evening Cheyne entertained a party of friends at his Cedar Lane residence. Among them was Gordon Anstruther, the well-known jewel expert, whom he had invited to get his opinion on that Kransiloff diamond. After dinner, Cheyne showed the diamond to Anstruther and his other guests in the library. He had laid it down for a moment on the writing table around which the party were grouped, when suddenly the electric lights were extinguished. And when Cheyne snapped on the lights again the diamond was gone.

"The local police were called in and the guests detained until their arrival. At their own unanimious request the guests were searched, ladies and gentlemen both, the ladies by a trained female searcher summoned from headquarters. Cheyne had locked the library door before taking the diamond from the safe in which he kept it; therefore no one could have entered the room from without during the momentary darkness. Nevertheless the servants were searched likewise. But the Kransiloff diamond could not be found."

"Quite so; I have heard already of this affair," the inspector interpolated a trifle impatiently. He wrinkled his brow in perplexity. "In any case, what has this to do with the murder of Mrs. Stuyvesant?"

"The officer who conducted the search at Cheyne's compiled a list of the guests present," Sharpe proceeded. "I have seen that list, and——"

"Yes?" The inspector sat bolt upright in his chair, instantly alert; he was beginning to see light now.

"First among the names was that of Mrs. Millicent Stuyvesant!"

V.

Detective McCarthy entered Detective Sergeant Sharpe's little office at headquarters with a ponderous official importance that seemed to overcrowd it.

"A man to see you sergeant," he announced. From the card the sergeant handed him, Sharpe read: "Victor Watersor."

He recollected the name as that of a man mentioned, in cross-examination, by Mrs. Stuyvesant's maid as having been very friendly with her mistress.

He had obtained from the maid the addresses of all Mrs. Stuyvesant's men friends who were known to her, and had written each inviting him to throw any light he could on the mystery of the taxicab murder. Already this appeal had brought two callers, young men eager enough to offer the police what help they might, but lacking any definite information to substantiate their good intentions.

"Show Mr. Watersor in, sergeant," Sharpe instructed. "And, as in the case of our previous visitors, you will remain on duty inside the room."

Victor Watersor bowed himself in, a man of polished manner and most gentlemanly exterior. His white teeth were bared in a smile of conventional greeting which gave his sallow, sharp-featured face a frank agreeableness it lacked in repose. "I received your letter regarding Mrs. Stuyvesant, sergeant," he said, quickly serious. "She

and I were close friends, and I need not tell you this shocking affair has distressed me greatly." He shuddered visibly. "I am afraid, however—much as I should like to do so—that I shall not be able to offer you much assistance."

At a nod from Sharpe, Detective McCarthy placed a chair for the visitor, then took up his position with his back to the door.

Watersor seated himself. "May I inquire, sergeant," he said, "whether you are following up any definite clew which may lead to the discovery of the—er"—he hesitated on the word—"murderer?"

Sharpe handed him a pair of nose-glasses.

Holding them between forefinger and thumb, Watersor examined them with interest. "I presume this was found in the taxicab—dropped by the murderer, no doubt?"

Sharpe knew perfectly well that the glasses found on the floor of the taxicab belonged to Richard Alywn, for that young man had admitted the fact. Somewhat evasively he answered: "It will lead eventually, I anticipate, to the murderer's arrest."

In receiving back the glasses Sharpe was very awkward; he took hold of them by the rim in such a way that Watersor was forced to move his fingers to the actual glass. "My hands are stiff with cold—I have just come in, and it is raw weather outside to-day," the detective apologized.

Still holding the glases by the rim, he handed them to Detective McCarthy, who accepted them in like fashion.

"If we could but establish the motive ——" Watersor stopped suddenly short to glance over his shoulder at the sound of the door closing. Detective McCarthy had withdrawn.

"The motive for the crime was robbery," Sharpe pronounced decisively, so decisively that Watersor sat up sharply, with a startled stare. "Mrs. Stuyvesant," the detective proceeded, "was robbed by her murderer of the famous Kransiloff diamond, which she, in turn, had stolen from its rightful owner, Mr. Silas P. Cheyne. The diamond was concealed in the heel of one of her evening slippers. The heel was fashioned in a hollow compartment opening with a spring released by pressure on the heel itself; and during a momentary extinction, ingeniously contrived of the lights in Cheyne's library, she had appropriated the jewel and hidden it in this secret recess."

Watersor was dumfounded; he refused to credit the detective's amazing statement. But, sergeant!" he protested hotly. "Mrs. Stuyvesant's reputation is socially beyond reproach! Why, I myself have always esteemed her——"

"The man who murdered Mrs. Stuyvesant was associated with her in the robbery at Cheyne's," Sharpe continued, regardless of his visitor's indignation. "Otherwise, how did he know that she had the diamond in her possession? How did he know that she carried it concealed in the heel of her shoe? That he did know these facts is demonstrated beyond a doubt. Everything points to the murder having been planned with the diamond as the definite objective.

"Such was this scoundrel's cupidity that rather than share with his accomplice the proceeds of their joint theft he murdered her and robbed her!" Sharpe spoke with quick passion. His eyes, keen as a ferret's, focused Watersor's and held them as if hypnotically.

Watersor's eyes were glassy in their fixity. His mouth gaped. He seemed stunned; horrified by the detective's sensational revelations.

"It is easy to reconstruct the crime," Sharpe resumed more evenly. "The murderer obtained possession of the taxicab by bribing the chauffeur. Disguised in the chauffeur's coat and cap, he picked up Mrs. Stuyvesant from

Cheyne's house in Oak Street. He drove her into a deserted part of the park, murdered her, and removed her shoes, one of which, he knew, concealed the stolen Kransiloff diamond.

"Having secured the diamond, his first thought—self-protective instinct—was to get rid of the shoes, which, so long as they remained in his possession, were damning evidence against him. There was a lake not very far from where he stood, which seemed a secure hiding place. The first scheme for disposal of the shoes that presented itself was to sink them in the lake. And this was a fatal mistake. He failed to take into consideration that the lake was exactly the hiding place the police would reason that he had chosen. The shoes were recovered without difficulty.

"Fleeing from the scene of his crime, the murderer encountered a young man very intoxicated. This young man—Richard Alywn—had wandered into the park and lost his way. The murderer struck him down with a heavy, blunt instrument, as was testified by the wound on Alywn's head. Then he stripped Alwyn of his evening coat and silk hat. This enabled him to discard his incriminating disguise as the taxi driver. At the same time it enabled him to transform his appearance and thus facilitate his get-away."

Watersor was mopping his forehead. Stepping closer, Sharpe continued his arraignment.

"In the pocket of the chauffeur's overcoat, left by the murderer beside the prostrate Alywn, was found the intrument with which the murder was committed—a pad saturated with chloroform. Together with the pad was the vial in which the chloroform had been contained. Apparently, in making some little adjustment to the engine of the taxicab, the murderer had gotten his fingers coated with a mixture of grease and grime. On the vial were distinct prints of his thumb and first finger——"

Watersor had risen to his feet. His eyes were staring, his lips twitched convulsively; his face was ghastly. "The glasses!" he said chockingly. "You—I——"

In a flash he had realized the ruse whereby Sharpe had induced him to register the impression of his thumb and forefinger on the specially prepared glass.

Detective McCarthy burst unceremoniously into the room. "The finger prints on the glasses correspond exactly with those on the chloroform vial," he announced triumphantly.

Later, when the inspector summoned Sharpe to his office to report that through information furnished by Watersor, the Kransiloff diamond had been recovered, the detective explained:

"As soon as I examined the taxicab and the body and saw there was no evidence of a struggle, I knew that I had to look for Mrs. Stuyvesant's murderer among her own men friends. Obviously only some one whom she knew and trusted could have approached her close enough, without arousing her suspicion, to chloroform her before she had time to offer resistance."

The inspector frowned. "But when you invited Mrs. Stuyvesant's men friends to call on you here at headquarters, how did you know that the guilty man would come?" he asked, still a trifle puzzled. "To a guilty mind an official police intimation to appear at headquarters must be alarming in the extreme. It's like showing a naughty kid a cane and politely inviting him to come and be whipped. Why didn't your letter prompt Watersor to flight?"

"That's a question of psychology," and Sharpe smiled. "The guilty man—Watersor—felt secure in the belief that the police did not suspect him. Therefore he came, as I reasoned he would. Because to remain away would have been to confess his guilt."

The Feudist's Fear

by Grover Kidwell

THEY were standing on a flat, moss-covered rock under an oak tree. The man put his right hand under the slender girl's left arm. His left arm he put over her right shoulder and crooked it until his long fingers rested against her pretty chin. He then tilted her dark head backward, and their lips met in a swift kiss.

Perhaps, no one would have guessed that Bill Dossett was really a very fickle person, nor that pretty Jane Douglas, with her lovely blue-gray eyes and small, piquant mouth, could prove altogether vengeful and dangerous.

"Queen of all the mount'ins in East Tennessee!" said Bill Dossett. "That's you, my honey gal."

"Prince of ever'wheres!" the girl returned, clinging to him. "That ain't nobody but you, Bill."

A brief silence. The girl's handsome lover was thoughtful.

"I was just wonderin' what you'd do, Jane," Bill began lightly, "if I was to git sweet on another gal?"

"I'd just kill you dead, that's all," Jane answered readily, and gave him her sweetest smile. "Plumb dead, Bill."

However, Bill Dossett was brave enough—or faithless enough—to risk it. He did not call at the Douglas home the next Friday afternoon, as was his habit, nor the next, nor the day following. Fully a month went by without so much as a word from Bill, and during that time the perplexed and distressed mountain girl felt that her love for him had all but burned out her heart, leaving in that throbbing dynamo of life little else than the ashes of the things that had seemed so dear and sweet. For Jane Douglas entertained a suspicion that grew in strength daily. More than once she had heard that a certain girl thought the world of Bill Dossett. Jane might have learned the truth easily enough, but she was afraid to ask questions, afraid of what the truth might prove to be. So she waited —and suffered.

Finally, the inevitable word came. It was conveyed, of course, by other lips than Bill Dossett's. The man who had been her sweetheart, who had called her a queen, and who had received her first kiss, was now paying court steadily to the beautiful Emma Davis, the much-sought-after daughter of High Sheriff Albert Davis. More than that, Bill had been made a deputy sheriff, and it was known that he already had begun "spotting" moonshine stills for Albert Davis and his officers to raid. That last meant he had become a sworn enemy to a great many of the hill people, especially and necessarily to all men such as Jane's brother Andrew, who, regardless of the law, did not consider it a very great sin to make cornmeal into "white lightnin'."

High Sheriff Albert Davis lived with his daughter in a fine house down in Elk Valley. Bill Dossett was himself a valley man. He was where he would be able to see Emma Davis every day.

With one last struggle, the hill girl's love for the new deputy died completely and for always. Jane Douglas knew it

would be as easy to carry Pine Mountain on her shoulders as to give her love and faith to Bill again.

But that did not mean Jane would try to forget, and perhaps fall in love with the next handsome man who came along. That would have been the way of many women, and doubtless the best way, but not the way of any Tennessee highlander, such as the daughter of Uncle Jason Douglas. Behind Jane there was a long line of daring clansmen and feudists, and so her love for Bill had no sooner taken wings than something terrible poured itself into her mountain heart, altogether changing her from what she had seemed to be, making her an entirely different person from the lately sweet and mild-tempered Jane Douglas. It was as if the ghosts of past generations of fearless mountain men and women rose up and whispered into her heart and mind, that now nothing on earth was so important and dear as vengeance—terrible and complete and wholly satisfying vengeance.

"Coward! Houn' dog! Liar!" the girl said to the woods about her father's big log house, which squatted on a ridge across Pine Mountain from Elk Valley. "Oh, how much ashamed you've made me! You—you——" Jane clinched her small hands until the veins in her wrists stood out frightfully, and bit her red lips until they bled.

It was the day after Jane had heard the truth. She was standing in a little path which led through a clump of black pines.

"What's the matter, gal?" Uncle Jason's voice suddenly surprised her. "Talkin' to yourse'f, my gal?" he added. "Funny way you're actin', honey."

Jane glared at him during a brief silence. She panted, still clinching her hands and biting her lips. Then:

"Good heavens, dad! Surely you know what's the matter, don't you? Surely you do, dad."

"Listen here, gal; you just listen to me. You just stop actin' this way, now. Of course I know what's the matter, gal, and I got to say I'm plumb surprised at you, I am. I say, now, you wouldn't want him to know about this, I bet. That'd just please the low-livered rascal, wouldn't it? Of course it would. Can't you see, gal? You're actin' plumb silly, Jane, my honey. Just forget it right now; don't let on like you've noticed. It'd sure make me a lot ashamed fer him to know that my gal's in sech a bad way, just beca'se he went and got sweet on the sheriff's little black-eyed peach. Now, it sure would, I'm tellin' you."

Jane looked straight into Uncle Jason's gray eyes. She fought for calmness.

"Dad, I don't care a bit fer him now, of course; I swear I wouldn't have him if he was the last man in the worl'. I swear I wouldn't, dad. But I do hate him, though; I hate him with ever' breath I draw. And I been wonderin', dad, ever since yesterday—I—I been wonderin' if they ain't no plumb red, rich blood among my men folks, like folks say they used to be among the old Douglases; them that wasn't afraid to fight for the sake of rightin' the wrongs others had done 'em, dad, er even to die. You and Andrew ain't said nothin' about what you mean to do, if anything; and so I just been wonderin'."

"What you mean, gal?" The old man's eyes narrowed, and deep wrinkles appeared on his forehead. "Want to stir up trouble, eh—womanlike?"

Jane did not answer at once. Her mental faculties still struggled for calmness and clear thought.

"Dad, they was a time, wasn't they, when the Douglas men wouldn't near 'a' let one of their women folks be treated treacherous? He—he treated

me nice when he was with me, of course, but he made me think he loved me, and he made others think he meant to marry me; and then——"

"Now, you listen here to me, gal." The big old man suddenly leaned toward the girl with a threatening look in his sharp gray eyes. "You gittin' purty wild, ain't you, talkin' about revenge on a man, just beca'se he took a notion he loved somebody else besides you? He treated you a lot mean, of course, but didn't he have a right to quit you if he wanted to? You say you wouldn't have him if he was the last man in the worl'. Well, then, show by your actions that you sure enough feel that way. Don't, fer all our sakes, let folks know you're all stirred up over this matter. And don't talk about your men folks takin' revenge fer you. The Douglases to-day ain't like the Douglases used to be—the ole killin' Douglases—and I'm a lot glad of it. We're more human now than them ole boys was; we're livin' in a better worl'. So don't start no more talk like that, my gal."

The look which Jane gave him showed the disappointment she felt.

"No, the Douglas men now ain't like the Douglas men used to be," she said bitterly. "The Douglas men now ain't got no backbone. But you can git this on your mind, dad," she added quickly as he lifted a toil-worn hand in protest, "I ain't forgittin'; and a woman don't always have to have a man to take revenge fer her."

"Listen here, gal, to me; listen to me fer a minute more afore you fly plumb off the handle," said Uncle Jason, his voice grown suddenly persuasive. "You know what the Good Book says, don't you, honey? It says, don't it, that nobody ain't got no right to take revenge but the Lord? And when folks go ag'in' that teachin', they mighty nigh sure to suffer fer it, my gal."

Jane made as if to reply, hesitated, and then, with a disdainful look at her father, turned and walked away.

Uncle Jason stared after her with a perplexed expression in his eyes. He shook his gray head sadly. Then he folowed.

"That'd be a purty note, wouldn't it?" he said over her shoulder. "Shoot a man just beca'se a gal's been disapp'inted in love? Huh! Not me, my gal. I ain't gone crazy yet. Not a bit like the ole Douglases, I ain't, and I'm a lot glad of it. Your dad's tellin' you to come to your right senses, Jane, and you better heed his words. Study a while and calm yourse'f. You got a good mind, Jane. It'll teach you to behave if you'll let it. I'm goin' back to the house now."

"Wait a minute, dad." Jane wheeled about as he started to retrace his steps. "Bill Dossett's a deputy now, and he's spottin' stills fer Albert Davis and his gang. He knows Andrew makes licker, and sooner er later, he's nearly sure to be sneakin' aroun' over here lookin' fer Andrew's still. What you gonna do then?"

"Not a dad-gun thing, of course," said the old man with some heat. "I ain' never been willin' fer Andy to make licker, and I sure ain't gonna uphold any of his lawlessness. He's his own man and does as he pleases, and it'll be his own lookout, if his still's raided."

"His still won't never be spotted by Bill Dossett," Jane declared, her eyes dilating. "I think Andrew's too much of a man to allow that dog in this neck of the woods atter the way he's treated me. Andrew would just simply put out his light. You watch——"

"Listen here, gal, to me. Don't you put anything like that in Andy's mind. Don't you——" But Jane, her head elevated haughtily, was walking rapidly away.

Frowning darkly, the old mountaineer turned and stalked toward his log house, muttering under his breath.

During the following few days, Jane tried artfully, but without success, to convince both her father and her brother Andrew, the latter a large, gawky, good-humored fellow of thirty years, that Bill Dossett's "light" really should be put out. Not once did Jane mention murder, but her kinsmen knew perfectly what she meant. Jane's thoughts had grown to be altogether wicked so far as they concerned Bill Dossett and his continued existence and possible happiness. All the bad blood of the vengeful old feudists who had "gone on afore" seemed to be fairly boiling in poor Jane's wild little heart.

Her father argued, reasoned, made threats. Several times he took down the Good Book from the old mantelpiece, and pointed with a brown finger to those words which stated very plainly that no one had the right to vengeance but the Mighty Ruler Himself.

As to her brother, Andrew, he only laughed at her terrible hints and insinuations, saying that she was acting "plumb silly," that she ought to prove her good sense by forgetting about Bill Dossett, and making an effort to be happy.

"If that pizen critter sneaks aroun' and spots my still," he told her, "all I want is to know it; and then I won't be thar when Albert Davis comes with his gang to make the raid. You see, gal, I'm gonna play on the safe side as near as I can. I wouldn't shoot Bill Dossett even if he'd come to search this house. I just know plumb good and well, that the penitentiary would be a awful torment to a man of my free-roamin' nature."

But arguments and advice and all sorts of wise reflections were totally lost on Jane. Jane, however, it must be admitted, was herself afraid of the penitentiary. She knew, though, that twice or three times, far back in the past, the Douglas women had taken human life, in defense of their men, and had managed to foil the law. So, if she must take revenge for herself, she would try to be as shrewd as they. She would be very, very careful. Surely the law would not be hard to fool.

At such times when Uncle Jason's lately assumed vigilance over his daughter relaxed, Jane took long and silent walks alone, peering narrowly here and there, watching, waiting. Often the unhappy girl shook her fists at the big trees and hissed dreadful things through clinched teeth.

All things do not always come to him who waits; but something, good or bad, will sometimes come to the person who hopes and yearns and prays for its arrival—and stands ready to receive it before it passes on. At any rate, Jane finally got her chance at Bill Dossett, and her opportunity for revenge was not at all unexpected. She had felt that Fate would eventually guide his big feet across Pine mountain so that his life might be taken from him as the price for his fickleness and cowardly deceit. The blood of the old feudists helped Jane to believe sincerely that he owed nothing less than that to her.

Having discovered Bill Dossett lurking in the woods, not far from her father's house, and knowing it was his object to "spot" her brother's moonshine still, the girl saw a splendid opportunity to send him hence. Doubtless he would prowl around a good while, at least, until he could locate the still, and there was no reason to feel that she could not choose with care the most suitable time and place. It would be all the better that the scene of the tragedy be as far from the big log house as possible. Her father or her brother, of course, might be accused; no doubt one of them would be, or perhaps both; but no one would be able to prove either of them guilty. And she could take care of herself. The law would be defeated.

Jane hurried home and cautiously took Uncle Jason's .45 caliber revolver. After making sure it was loaded all around and in perfect working order, she stole unseen from the house, the dangerous weapon in her right hand but concealed for the moment by the folds of her dress.

A few minutes later the pretty Jane Douglas was stalking the footsteps of Bill Dossett with the care and caution of a full-blooded Indian.

Any officer, be he "revenuer" or high sheriff, who successfully raids moonshines in the mountains of East Tennessee must have his "spotter," and that is what Bill had become shortly after he took up with the lovely daughter of High Sheriff Albert Davis. The spotter invariably must be the very finest kind of woodsman, quick and sharp of eye, keen of ear, smooth and silent on his feet. He must have a thorough knowledge of the hill people and their strange ways. He should kiss his dear ones good-by each morning, too, and be ready to die at any moment.

Bill Dossett met all the exacting requirements of a spotter, except that at no time was he ready to face death with even the slightest feeling of security. Bill was about twenty-five years old and of medium height, with dark, restless eyes and black hair. Not a wild thing in the woods was more alert than Bill, and in his movements he was like a panther.

But to-day there was matched against him one who as a woodswoman was little less than a wonder. For more than a mile she shadowed him so skillfully and noiselessly that he did not even once suspect her presence, though she was often not more than twenty-five or thirty yards from him.

The scene of this silent but terrible drama was extremely rugged, with an atmosphere of brooding quiet and loneliness. The spotter did not follow the one crooked, rocky trail which led across Pine Mountain, but naturally chose to search out the wildest and roughest places. He passed very slowly and with infinite care along the sides of little ridges, around the gray cliffs, and through the patches of laurel and ivy, his every movement suggesting a stealthiness almost uncanny. Occasionally he paused in the deep hollows to peer inquisitively, half eagerly, half expectantly about, and always he minutely examined the waters of the clear little branches, searching ardently for "still slop." Bill Dossett was deeply in earnest, and knew his business perfectly.

Jane carried the big revolver in a way that plainly signified her familiarity with firearms. The slender girl's hair fell loose on her shoulders and back, and her strange, bright eyes, blazing at Bill's form nearly every second of the time, were indicative of the savage hatred in her bosom. No one would have had to guess that her whole heart and mind were consumed by one terrible purpose—the shooting to death of the man she followed.

At one of the little branches Bill spent an unusually long time, closely inspecting several rocks in its bottom, and Jane Douglas, watching him from over the edge of a cliff, was sure that at last he had found "still slop," indicating that a moonshine was somewhere upstream. Bill could only guess as to its distance, of course, but Jane knew her brother Andrew's still was not more than a hundred yards from the spotter.

It was now that Dossett straightened his shoulders and allowed a grin of satisfaction to spread slowly over his features, and at this the spying girl's tragic eyes blazed even more fiercely. She reasoned that he would make no attempt to raid the moonshine singlehanded, but would leave the woods at once to report to the high sheriff. So, with this thought in her mind, she made

off noiselessly for the trail to conceal herself in a place where she already had determined that the spotter should die.

A short while later, Jane was peering around the end of a large rock, the big revolver cocked and held in both hands. A level stretch of the trail lay before her, perhaps, fifty feet away, with only three of four small bushes intervening. Beyond the trail were a great many bushes and small saplings.

Jane was no sooner ready to make her kill than she heard her former lover approaching. Bill was whistling softly, and as he came onto the level stretch of trail, head erect and lips puckered, totally unaware of danger, Jane lifted the big revolver, looked over the barrel with glittering blue-gray eyes —and pulled the trigger.

As the report of the heavy weapon crashed through the woods, Bill Dossett stumbled and fell, and Jane was sure she had hit him. But, to her surprise and dismay, Bill regained his feet in an instant, and before she could fire again he had streaked away through the growth with the fleetness of a frightened deer.

After a savage exclamation of disappointment, the girl leaped from her place of concealment with her mind set on pursuing the intended victim. Then she came to an abrupt halt, gasped, and quivered suddenly. A low, quavering moan broke from her pale lips.

Clutching spasmodically at the air, mouth agape, head thrown back, her brother Andrew was staggering from among the bushes and saplings on the opposite side of the trail. As she watched him, horrified, he swayed about for a moment like a drunken man trying to grasp a support. Then he fell face downward, struggled, turned over on his back, and finally lay still.

During a brief, deathlike silence, Jane was powerless to speak or move a hand or foot. Presently her strength returned, and then her voice. She ran forward, whimpering, shuddering, sick with dreadful terror and sorrow. Her father's words of warning came back to her. She recalled in a flash how he had repeated over and over again that the right to take revenge belonged only to the Lord.

"Oh, Lordy! Oh, Lord A'mighty!" the girl cried, frightened and shocked almost out of her reason. "Oh, oh-o-o-oh!"

She fell on her knees by her brother's form and frantically seized the bosom of his coat with both hands.

"I've killed my brother!" she cried, tears beginning to flow down her white cheeks. "I missed that snake and killed my own brother! Oh, Andrew, Andrew!" She shook him fiercely. "Oh, Andrew, please speak to me! Surely this ain't so! Oh, Andy, honey, has your mean sister went and killed you dead?"

"Not quite, gal!" said the man with startling suddenness, and he pushed her hands away and sprang lightly to his feet, laughing.

Jane, stricken dumb for the moment, remained exactly as he left her, except that she turned her horror-filled eyes upward to look at his face. She did not have the strength to rise but remained kneeling on the ground, much like a figure of wax, and gazed at him.

"Listen here, gal," he began, smiling down at her. "I saw that lizard down yander in the holler. I think he spotted my still, and I was watchin' him to see if he was leavin' the woods. I didn't have any idee you was anywheres about, but when that shot was fired, and he fell and then jumped up and run like a ha'nt, I knowed just exactly what was happenin'—that you was atter his life. I had got ahead of him and was standin' a little ways back thar in the bushes, and that bullet from dad's forty-five

didn't miss my head more'n a foot. I think it was that bullet, gal, that caused me to take a sudden notion to teach you a lesson. And so you see what I done. And of course you're human enough to be glad that I was just foolin'—that I just acted like that to teach you a lesson. Let it be a good lesson to you fer the rest of your life, gal."

For another moment or two, Jane stared dumbly up at his good-humored face. Then she said:

"Andrew, take me home. I'm as weak as a kitten."

ALLEGED SWINDLER OF EMIGRANTS IS ARRESTED

SELLING faked steamship tickets to emigrants bound for America, and then escaping in an airplane with the sixty thousand dollars realized from the swindle, was a recent exploit of Andre Florian. As an employee of a society in Paris for the protection of emigrants, Florian was intrusted with the job of housing and feeding and purchasing steamship tickets for the travelers. For some time his work was satisfactory. One day he disappeared, and, thinking that he might have been murdered, the officials of the society asked the police to search for him. A few days later, when two hundred and fifty emigrants reached Cherbourg to embark for the United States, the reason for Florian's disappearance became apparent—he had sold all of them forged, worthless tickets. A fast monoplane was missed from Villa Coublay at the time Florian disappeared.

Parisian police heard of him some time later at Athens, in Greece, where he assumed the title of Count de Villaminor and claimed to be the nephew of the Spanish ambassador at Paris. It is alleged that he secured five hundred thousand francs' worth of diamonds there fraudulently, and then betook himself to Bucharest and later to Vienna. From Vienna he was traced to Berlin and from Berlin to Hamburg, where the police overtook and arrested him.

NARCOTICS HIDDEN IN TABLE

JOSEPH FELDMAN, a steward on the steamship *Susquehanna,* showed that he possessed great cunning when he chose a hiding place for twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of narcotics smuggled into the United States, but his cunning failed him when he was arrested and questioned by Doctor Carleton Simon, special deputy commissioner in charge of the narcotic division of the New York police. Caught selling cocaine and heroin in a New York hotel, Feldman was cross-examined in regard to his source of supply of the drug. He is said to have admitted that he smuggled the narcotics into the country and then cached them in the house where he boarded when his ship was in port.

The leg of a dining-room table belonging to his landlady was the hiding place he chose. Feldman succeeded in hollowing out a leg of the table without being detected by any one in the house. In this cavity he kept the drugs. When the police removed the center leaf of the table they found a board three inches thick screwed to the top of the leg. The officers unscrewed the board and disclosed Feldman's store of smuggled drugs.

Headquarters Chat

WE know the authors say we make them do all the work, even to writing the Chats, with the help of the readers; try to make us out a kind of stage manager. Well, perhaps we are. But stage managers have to work, and don't you for—get it! Also, it takes work—note that word—to find authors who will please a large number of discriminating readers.

Here is one of the latter class, and you will believe us—after you have read his letter—that we admire and love him as a brother.

"Dear Editor," declares Alexander Rankin, of No. 264 Riverside Drive, New York, "I am a constant reader of your magazine and can hardly wait till Tuesday comes along, so anxious am I to start devouring again. The Lord only knows how you do it, for you have about the keenest scent I have ever seen for trailing good authors who have something worth while to tell your readers. You seem to see them miles off and make a bee line for them. Poate felt a little peeved lately. Wonderful chap with the pen, isn't he? When people start talking about you and digging deep to try to prove that you are wrong, it shows you have them thinking, and believe me that's what D. S. M. seems to be doing with its wonderful issue of stories each week; and when you get them thinking they will start talking, and some one is bound to prick up his ears and begin asking questions. Talk about propaganda!

"By the way, to get back to telling the truth under any and all circumstances, I for one believe the old Bible saying about 'Telling the truth and the truth will make you free.' You cannot disprove this, for your magazine from cover to cover is doing all in its power to turn on the searchlight of truth and lighten up the dark places in the world. Ask Poate the true mission of all his stories.

"My last earnest wish is that you, personally, will be blessed with wonderful health, so that you will continue to live for many, many years to come, not only as a source of comfort and joy to your family and friends, but also to exercise your wonderful faculties in scenting out the gripping stories you are continually supplying for the readers of your magazine, and thus making the world a little brighter and happier than when you found it."

Mister Rankin, you are a gentleman and a scholar. We rise to thank you, sir!

Come, Mac, how can you, after reading this from the Blue Grass State, hold off any longer? We have tried *our* best, but those customers mean business.

"Dear Editor: About fifty of us old chaps want Johnston McCulley to stir himself and give us the fifth story of the Thunderbolt. I have a devil of a time keeping them quiet, but it does no good. I think you had better tell Johnston McCulley to get a move on himself. There are lots of threats being made about him. I guess you know what kind of people we are, so tell him to get busy. We are sorry we cannot send him some of the old stuff that comes in bottles, but we know how to get the what we want, and if he does what we want, we will give him what he wants if he ever comes to this part of the country. Will say the D. S. M. is the only magazine.

"Ashland, Kentucky. One of Your Customers."

If you don't just write in and do that Thunderbolt, and then hop a train for Ashland, Kentucky, you are not the man we think you are, Mac.

From an expert come these words of praise:

"DEAR EDITOR: Allow me to commend you on your many excellent stories appearing from time to time in the DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE. I am a professional conjurer of standing in various parts of the world, and I enjoy your stories to the utmost. The scientific study of criminology is my hobby, so you will understand why I like your stories.

"Wishing you an abundance of success, I remain, yours fraternally,

"No. 219 Desmond Street, Sayre, Pennsylvania. LINDEN HEVERLY."

The same to you, and much of it, brother.

But prose would not do for Arthur L. Smith, who just had to burst right into verse. We will close the performance with his poem.

The Thunderbolt is clever.
  Landon's Gray Boy is great.
Booth is just as good as ever,
  His Early Bird is never late.

Thubway Tham is not in jail;
  He is a little bit too slick.
Thinch for Tham to get bail,
  When pinched by any slick.

But what's the use in raving
  About these many crooks?
Just do a little saving;
  Fifteen cents will buy these books.

Our composite bow.

RAILROAD SAFETY GATES USED IN HOLDUP

WHERE a road and the Central Railway of New Jersey intersect near East Rahway, there is a safety gate, which, when lowered, warns people that a train is approaching the crossing. That is the place four bandits chose recently to hold up automobilists.

Shortly before midnight the men, heavily armed, overpowered the watchman at the crossing and locked him in the gate house. Then they lowered the safety gates on both sides of the track and waited for road vehicles. Two men were in the first automobile to be halted. One of them attempted to protect himself, but was struck over the head with a revolver and subdued. After robbing the automobilists the highwaymen locked them in a shanty back of the gate house and returned to the road. The second motor car that reached the gates had two women passengers and a man. These, too, were marched to the shanty, robbed, and locked up.

Shortly thereafter a third car approached, but the driver espied the armed men and, putting on speed, crashed through the gates and escaped. Fearing that the alarm would be given soon, the bandits released the driver of the second car and forced him to drive them in the direction of Roosevelt, New Jersey. When the car stuck in a mudhole the crooks left it and made their get-away on foot.

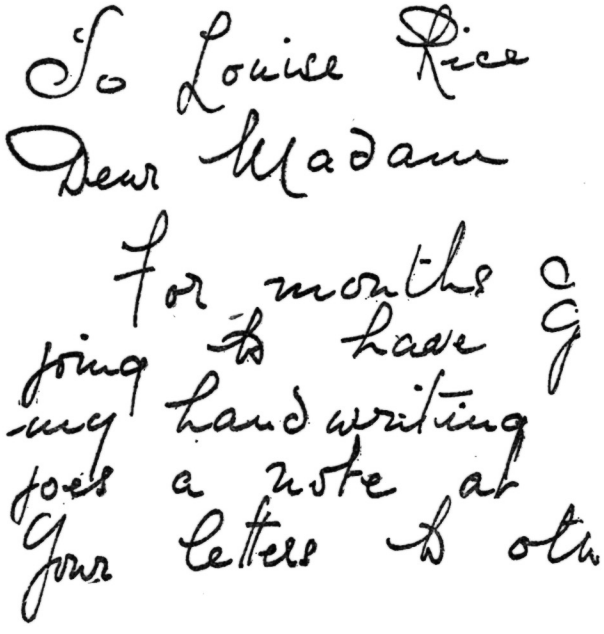
What Handwriting Reveals

If you are an employer and desire to place your employees in the positions in your office or factory for which they are best fitted; or if you are just about to step out into the world to earn your own living; or if crimes involving handwriting have been committed in your community; or if you want to know the characters of your friends as revealed in their chirography—send Louise Rice, in care of this magazine, specimens of the handwriting of the persons concerned, and inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. She will analyze the samples submitted to her and will give you her expert opinion of them, free of charge.

All communications will be held in strict confidence. When permission is granted, cases will be discussed in the department, with or without the illustrations. Of course, under no circumstances will the identity of the persons concerned be revealed.

Every care will be taken to return specimens of handwriting, but it is to be understood that Miss Rice cannot be responsible for them.

ELIMAR CLE.—Your handwriting is so indicative of one special talent that I wish to call special attention to it, because it is a perfect example. The peculiar, swinging rhythm to be noted in your writing, the lack of connection between the letters of your words, and your closed, but far-flung "D," might have been taken from the specimens of hundred of well-known singers and musical executionists.



These characteristics always show this talent for execution, but not for composition; the musical composers are apt to have a close, clipped, and accurate formation, very much like that which marks literary creators, plus more grace and minus some individuality. Aside from this pronounced indication of your

possibilities, your writing shows you imaginative, quick-tempered, jealous, but just; fond of money and what it will do, but not without some distaste for that phase of your own character. As for your talent, if you do not use it to good effect, it will be because of your laziness.

W. B. S.—Your handwriting shows pride, courage, and a great deal of vanity, backed up, to some extent, by real efficiency. The specimen numbered two shows lack of self-control and an excessive love of pleasure. Persons of this type are too apt to be the creatures of their environments. Number three expresses some unpleasant traits. This writer is unreasonably jealous, but is not always constant; is exacting and somewhat quarrelsome, but expects others to be sweet-tempered and yielding. The mind is almost totally undeveloped, which no doubt accounts for a great deal of the faults. The specimen numbered four shows good nature, good sense, kindliness, and instinctive moderation. This writer has a sweet and very affectionate disposition.

INTERESTED.—Thanks for your interest in this department. I wish you had written on white paper, so that I could have used your writing for an illustration. It shows me that your character is one in which hope and enthusiasm, ardor and impatience, are all strongly marked. The disposition you possess has much personal charm, but it is not one which helps you to much efficiency, is it? That is to say, you are more "interested" in being a nice, pleasant, good-hearted, and well-thought-of person than you are in actually being of some worth to the world. You are too sensitive to criticism, too open to the blandishments of vanity, too apt to be influenced by the bias of your surroundings and of the people who are most powerful in your world. There, that's a most unpleasant task, because you have such a pleasing personality that I hate to criticize you.

BERTHA A. O.—My dear, I am sure that you are not "a human iceberg." Any one who inclines her writing far to the right, has a delicate, but firm, pen pressure, and occasionally makes a very beautiful and spontaneous capital letter, cannot be what you are "dubbed" by those young men, whom I strongly suspect of being merely rather coarse young fellows whose standard of conduct is anything but high. If you are not easily friendly with people, console yourself with the thought that the reserved and shy young person is far more apt to be the gracious and popular man and woman than when the case is reversed. Your will power is weak, and this is your most serious defect. You are affectionate and deeply, truly unselfish, which is so beautiful and, alas, so rare a talent that it cannot be too highly praised.

JUNIUS F. H.—Yes, I would, for a wonder, advise you to go into business for yourself. You have not half so much practical training as most young men, but you have instinctive good judgment, and, combined with self-confidence, freedom from what nothing but the word "cocksureness" will describe. However, don't make the mistake of going into business on a large scale. You will succeed if you don't ask too much of yourself. Your mind learns slowly, though surely.

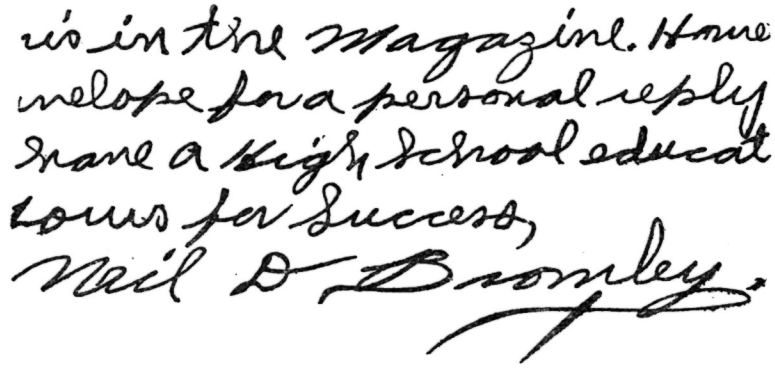
MARY MINAN, Michigan.—Yes, you forgot to send me a stamp, and you also forgot to send me the name of your city, so I am answering you here. That you are forgetful does not need the deduction of a graphologist, since, in your letter to me, you not only forgot stamp and address, but left out several important words. Your impatience, your lack of careful attention to detail, your inattention to many practical considerations of life, are very strongly marked in this hasty, unformed scrawl of yours. However, take heart! You have in-

dividuality in your letter formations, and you have real originality of thought, though not much power of expressing it. No, I don't think that you should dance. You need a good, thorough business training.

VESTA.—Why all this gloom? Your handwriting shows a sensible, practical person, without much imagination, so that it is probable that you've been talking too much to some Gloomy Gussie, who has warped your own naturally sunny disposition. No, indeed, you are not "wholly inefficient." You have the ability to give attention to any subject, with a fair amount of concentration, and that is not half so widespread a possession as I wish it were! You possess a pleasant, kind, and instinctively friendly personality.

FROM A READER OF D. S. M.—So you are not going to work at all, unless "it will pay in the end?" And you are only twenty years old, eh? And you are not working? And you feel that only I can "solve the riddle" of what you can really do? My boy, at present you are good for absolutely nothing. But, mind you, that is nothing to be discouraged about. The average girl and boy at twenty is in about the same condition. The hopelessness of you is your conceit. That is what really lies at the root of this letter which you yourself call "crazy." You want to be something different from the average young person; you are not willing to go through the trials and efforts of learning the world through the persistent struggle to accommodate yourself to it. Persons with no decided talents should try to adjust themselves. To start you off, let me say that at present you have only about one half the education which you need. Take a job—any old kind of a job—and hold it down for a year or two while you go to night school and get a mental equipment. Don't think that I'm unsympathetic. I really pity any one who, through lack of good training and advice, has fallen into such an unfortunate state, and I am sure that when you really try to do better you will see the absurdity of your present attitude.

NEIL D. BROMLEY.—Your signature and your writing are certainly not attuned. This difference always shows some marked contrast in character and personality. In your case, your awkward, constrained, and immature letter formations, in the body of your writing, show your lack of true development, while the flowing, open, and easy formations of your signature show self-confidence, ease of manner, and the probability of a pleasant though not original brand of humor.



Now then, what you need is to let your personal qualifications stand still for a time, while you line up your real attributes. Thus, your facility with language is not very real, and your understanding of your own tongue nothing to boast of. Your disposition is kind and friendly, but if pinched—put into a

corner—and obliged to choose between your own good and that of another, I think that you would find your nature less fine than it appears. Being only nineteen, you are still little more than a child, and need not be discouraged. You have talents for any kind of work requiring salesmanship.

MRS. E. J. W.—Well, I'm glad this second set of specimens arrived all right. Your handwriting seems very immature and girlish for the mother of all these half-grown youngsters. This means that you are maturing slowly, for which you should be thankful. A longer, fuller life is usually the portion of those who are not women and men too early. I like your frankness, your freedom from suspicion and from petty calculation, and your innocence of evil. Note that I do not say "ignorance," which is no virtue! With all that, you have a certain shrewdness in your make-up, so that, if you were imposed on once by a person, I would expect that person to get a surprise if he or she tried it again. Persons of your type are often successful in business because of this latent shrewdness, all the more effective because they do not seem to possess it. Florence's "hand" shows her to be tending toward a development of your own kind of character. She will learn more from actual contact with life than from books, so don't be too severe upon her when you find that the higher she goes in her studies, the less she will like them. Let her turn to practical, business learning. Dorothy will probably be a good scholar, although just at present she does not promise so well. Appeal must be made to her imagination and her pride. I think it likely that she would make a good school-teacher, if she can be brought past the point where she will want to marry too early. She is of such a romantic disposition that this is sure to happen, so be on the lookout. Your son's writing expresses far more of individuality than that of either of the girls. He is rather a turbulent character, however, and I suspect that he will give a great deal of trouble unless he is very wisely handled. It is pretty early to make the prediction, but it is possible that he will be of the type that should go to college. Whatever you do, don't turn him out with other boys, without the supervision of some older person. This is always a great mistake with boys, and most so with those who are hot-tempered and impressionable, as this one is.

HOW TO READ CHARACTER IN HANDWRITING

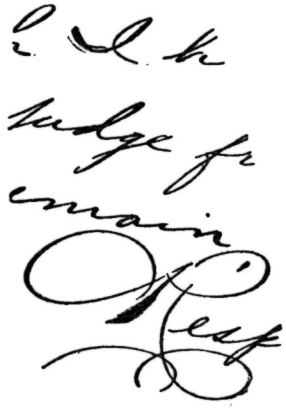
LESSON XXXVII—The Capital I

BEFORE going into the consideration of the variations on this letter, it is well for us to pause and consider some fundamental facts concerning humanity. One of the most important of these is that personality is often entirely disassociated from character. Thus, we may have a pleasant, modest personality, behind which great egotism lurks. And sometimes we may have a flamboyant, aggressive personality, under which there is really true humility.

It must be considered, also, that what is justified in one person is not in another. Some great geniuses have been enormously vain. Also, the mistake most character readers make is in thinking that, because a man or woman is great in some one particular, he or she must be in all. And a still more frequent mistake is the unification of the personality and the character.

Occasionally character and personality are found in harmony. In such a case the person in whom this rare union has taken place is invariably of great

use to the world, either actively, through genius or talent, or passively, through being a perfect type.



Therefore, the student must not be surprised to find the capital I rather a baffling study, especially when he applies it to persons with whom he is well acquainted, and whose personalities have had a good chance to impress themselves upon him.

Generally speaking, the I with a small, well-formed upper loop, without inharmony with the rest of the letter formations, shows a character of good sense, poise, and a certain sane sense of humor. (The dash "i" dot will often be found associated.)

However, this modest I is sometimes found in writing where other capitals are aggressive and inflated, and in specimens where the overlarge, "small" r is frequently used.

In this case we must estimate the writer as secretly vain, but possessed of sufficient common sense to be ashamed of it and to conceal it; also, we must estimate the personality as far more modest than is warranted, and therefore know at once that we have a disassociated character and personality with which to deal.

EXPERT LEGAL ADVICE

Conducted by LUCILE PUGH

In writing the Expert Legal Advice Department please be careful to give full details of your case, stating whether or not it has been before the courts previously, or whether or not it has been submitted to a lawyer of your locality. If you desire Miss Pugh to find a lawyer for you give your address with care: personal address, city, and State. Unless accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope your communication will be answered in this column.

ANSWERS TO READERS' QUERIES

BILLY D.—The only safe way to buy property and be sure of what you are getting is to have the advice of some disinterested person who knows the locality, and real-estate values. Since you knew nothing of the town and never had bought any property before, it would have paid you to have been more careful. Unfortunately you have no redress in law. If you were so foolish as to

purchase land which is unfitted for the purpose you wanted it for, that is your misfortune. As you were so careful not to tell the real-estate dealer what your true purpose was, you cannot charge that he defrauded you. I am very sorry.

MRS. MACDONOUGH.—In many States desertion is cause for absolute divorce. I should recommend you to secure a divorce on that ground. It is my experience that trying to force either a man or woman to return to a deliberately and cruelly deserted partner is a waste of time. Sooner or later the absconding partner again departs. In cases of genuine causes of disagreement, I always use my utmost efforts to reconcile the couple, and have frequently succeeded, but as this man evidently married you under the impression that he could get your property away from you, and left when he found that he could not, I see no object in continuing the legal tie.

INQUIRERS.—These disputes over large areas of land now situated in the heart of cities seldom end in anything but loss to the disputants. So far as my memory serves me, there has never been a case of that kind brought to a satisfactory conclusion. If you will send your name and address, together with very full data on this case, I will give you a more extended opinion.

E. A.—The custody of the children is usually given to the mother, if they are of tender years. I cannot understand your objection to your wife's having two of your children, since your cause of disagreement with her is purely that of incompatibility. Few men are fitted to care for infants of one and three years of age. You would have to give the court some very strong reason for your desire to separate them from their mother. I fear that it is prompted merely by a spirit of revenge. The fact that your wife has voluntarily, on your representation, given you the two older children, would count heavily in her favor. Her unspotted moral charater, to which you bear testimony in your letter to me, would shield her from the censure of the court. Go to a lawyer, by all means, and state your case, as you have to me. If he has a conscience he will try to show you that your whole attitude toward your wife is wrong. This is no longer the Middle Ages, during which a man literally owned his wife and children. If she has been doing a good part of the wage earning, besides maintaining the home and properly caring for the children, the scales of justice will tip toward her, you may be sure.

The How, When, and Where of Success

Conducted by RUTHERFORD SCOTT

If it is impossible for you to wait for Mr. Scott to touch upon the work in which you are especially interested, in one of his articles, send a stamped, addressed envelope, and a careful, accurate, and brief statement of what your education is, what your experience has been, and where you wish to begin your career; also, the amount of time and money which you can give to your apprenticeship. He will write you a personal letter, and tell you what you wish to know.

The Forest Ranger

UNDER this name most of us identify all work among our national forests, but the actual positions open under the proper classification of "Forest Service of the United States" are: Forest supervisor, deputy forest supervisor, forest examiner, forest assistant, logging engineer, lumberman, scaler, grazing examiner, grazing assistant, forest ranger, forest guard, and field assistant.

In accordance with the law governing the selection of forest-service men, those residing in the State or Territory for which application is made, will receive first consideration. Nonresidents will receive attention only when the

list of waiting applicants, native to the State, is exhausted. This restriction as to living in the State is not imposed upon applicants for forest assistant, logging engineer, lumberman, or grazing assistant.

Information as to the times and places at which examinations will be held, and the steps necessary to secure admission, may be obtained only from the United States Civil Service Commission, at Washington, D. C.

There are clerical positions in the district offices and at the supervisors' headquarters in the national forests. For information about these positions, application should be made to the Civil Service Commission, stating specifically that it is the clerical work in which the applicant is interested.

The highest position in the forest service, that of forest supervisor, is filled by promotion from lower ranks. Forest supervisors must give their entire time to the work. They hire all their help and are held directly responsible for its efficiency. Deputy supervisor is a position filled by promotion from ranger or forest examiner.

Rangers are appointed only from eligibles obtained through competitive examinations. They must be able-bodied and capable of enduring hardships. Invalids and consumptives seeking light out-of-door occupation should never apply for any kind of forest service. No one need expect to pass the examinations who cannot take care of himself and his horse in regions remote from settlement and supplies. A forest ranger must be able to build cabins and pack provisions. He must know something of surveying, estimating, and scaling lumber, and must understand live stock. In some forests the ranger is required to be a specialist in some one of these lines. Where saddle or pack horses are required, rangers must own and maintain them. The entire time of a ranger is given to the service, but under special conditions rangers may hold temporary State or county offices in the protection of forest, game, or stock.

The forest examiner is promoted from forest assistant. Forest assistants need to know technical as well as practical forestry. They are assigned to timber cruising, protective duties, subordinative administrative work on timber sales, planting, land classification, and so on, for at least two years before they should even begin to think of promotion.

The logging engineer for the forest service must be a man of exceptionally high qualifications, involving knowledge and experience in his line, and acquaintance with lumber markets and prices and other technical and business features of his calling.

Lumbermen must have had thorough training in logging, cruising, scaling, and milling. They assist local forest officers in the conduct of lumber sales, as well as in reporting on tracts of timber where application for sale has been made.

Scalers are required to have had much previous experience in woods work.

The grazing examiner secures his position by promotion. Grazing assistants should have technical training in botany, and both training and experience in dealing with range problems involving stock, the forage crop, and so on.

Forest guards and forest assistants are the men who are employed temporarily, when there is danger of fires or need of an unusual amount of work done. No examinations for such positions are held. Application for them should be made to the local district forester's office.

The district offices for the forest service are at the following places: Missoula, Montana; Denver, Colorado; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Ogden, Utah; San Francisco, California; Portland, Oregon, and Washington, D. C. The telephone directory would give the street locations.

Examinations are usually held in October of each year at the national forest headquarters, to which only able-bodied males, citizens of the United States between the ages of twenty-one and forty years are admitted.

The entrance salary of rangers is from nine hundred to twelve hundred

dollars per year, depending upon the nature and location of the work to which the appliant is fitted.

The salary offered, as a beginning, does not seem large, but it must be remembered that living expenses in such work are negligible, and that it is often possible to take up one of the home sites within the national forests themselves. The service offers steady promotion to a man who is willing to study as well as to work. Mere interest in the open, and liking for it, and a general woodsman's knowledge, will give a man the position of ranger, sometimes, but to rise he must take his career seriously and press forward along the special lines of technical training required.

There is no doubt but that the forest service is the ideal occupation for certain types of young men; but it is my belief that a great many of those who have made inquiries of me on this subject are merely attracted by the romance of the thing, and—I greatly fear—by the belief that it is an easy way to make a living. To this I reply that a forest ranger and every servant of the forest, no matter what his position, is required to give to his work not only his attention and his strength, but his heart and his soul. He will not progress far if he shows that he is lazy or mercenary or bad-tempered. He will win the respect of his superiors and his chance of rising from the ranks only through the most unselfish and devoted work. He must imperil his life without a moment's hesitation, for the safety of the forest or those within it, and he must not be tired, no matter how long his hours stretch out.

But to one who longs for the far places and the sweet breath of nature on his face, together with a modest living, no better line could be suggested.

UNDER THE LAMP

CONDUCTED BY HENRY A. KELLER

SINCE this department started, I have received I don't know how many hundreds of letters from readers saying that they have become so interested in cryptography, which is the science of ciphers and their solution, that they have made it a hobby. Many, too, have been started, through the knowledge they gained of the subject here, upon the use of secret writing in their businesses, their personal correspondence, and so on. The problem that is this week's "brain teaser" was sent me by one of the readers whose attention was drawn to the possibilities of cryptography as a business asset, some eighteen months ago, and who had an interesting experience as a result of his flare for the subject.

Mr. Frank H. Lewis, the reader mentioned above, is the proprietor of a large retail clothing store. His assistant, a man of thirty or so, shared his interest in secret writing, and between them they worked out a cipher system. When they did this, it was more for the fun of the thing than for any other reason; they never dreamed that they would have occasion to use it in a mighty tight situation.

One day, about noon, when Lewis was alone in the store, a stranger came in and said he was the representative of a well-known tailoring firm, and began to engage him in conversation about a new line of goods. The stranger wasn't there long when Lewis' assistant came in from lunch.

Immediately the assistant sat down to his desk and began to write; in a few minutes he stepped up to Lewis' desk and placed a note before his employer. The note was written in the cipher the pair had made up themselves, and Lewis

had no trouble reading it while his caller continued to talk. The result of Lewis' reading was very dramatic. Quietly and swiftly he reached inside a drawer of his desk and brought out a revolver. As he leveled it at the caller's head he ordered him to leave without an instant's delay—which the caller did, as gracefully and as quickly as his ruffled front would permit.

Here is the cipher that caused Lewis' sudden and unexpected action. It contains two letters for every single letter of the transcribed text. See if you can solve it, and look for the solution in next week's issue.

OQ QS NP EG DF RT RT HJ NP MO ZB KM GI NP KM CE TV OQ LN ZB MO RT ZB SU HJ MO IK TV QS XZ AC NP WY VX GI DF MO GI DF VX ZB RT SU QS HJ DF CE RT HJ WY XZ DF ZB QS RT ZB FH NP FH DF SU GI HJ LN NP TV SU PR TV HJ BD JL

The answer to last week's problem is: "Crime never pays." The letters in it were every sixth letter of the line of Chick Davis' philosophy. Easy, eh?

Here Are Some of the Features You Will Find in the Issue Out Next Week:

COILED GOLD

A Novel

By HERMAN LANDON

A CLOSET CRIME

By ERNEST M. POATE

ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF WRONG STREET

By CHARLES W. TYLER

And Other Short Stories

Additional Installments of "BLIND MEN," by Edgar Wallace, and "ROSE OF DESTINY," by Bayard Blackford

You Will Help Yourself, Your Dealer, and Us if You Order Your Copy in Advance

MISSING

This department, conducted in duplicate in DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE and WESTERN STORY MAGAZINE, thus giving readers double service, is offered free of charge to our readers. Its purpose is to aid them in getting in touch with persons of whom they have lost track.

While it will be better to use your name in the notice, we will print your request "blind" if you prefer. In sending "blind" notices, you must, of course, give us your right name and address, so that we can forward promptly any letters that may come for you. We reserve the right to reject any notice that seems to us unsuitable.

If it can be avoided, please do not send us a "General Delivery" post-office address, for experience has proved that those persons who are not specific as to address often have mail that we send them returned to us marked "not found." It would be well, also, to notify us of any change in your address.

When you hear from the person you are seeking, tell us, so that we may take your notice out.

Now, readers, help those whose friends or relatives are missing, as you would like to be helped if you were in a similar position.

WARNING.—Do not forward money to any one who sends you a letter or telegram, asking for money "to get home," et cetera, until you are absolutely certain that the author of such telegram or letter is the person you are seeking.

BARNABY, F. N. RAYMOND, formerly of the U. S. S. "Wolverine" in 1908, at which time he had a brother, William, living in Marquette, Michigan, and working as a brakeman for the M. R. Railroad. An old friend would like to hear from him or from any one who can give news of him. F. K., care of this magazine.

SANSON, GEORGE C.—He was last heard of in 1916, when he was in Brooklyn, New York. His daughter, Effie, would like to know what has become of him, and will be most grateful to any one who can tell his present whereabouts or help her in any way to find her father. Effie, care of this magazine.

McBRIDE, G. D.—Any one knowing his present whereabouts will do a great favor by notifying his wife, Mrs. G. D. McBride, Troy Hotel, San Diego, California.

BYRNES, AGNES.—When last heard from she was living on West Washington Street in Los Angeles, California. Any one who knows her present address will do a kindness by sending it on, or if she should see this, she is asked to write to R. G. Seward, care of this magazine.

MILLER, WILLIE and **GEORGE.**—When these boys were last seen they were in the State school at Owatona, Minnesota. Their sister, who has not seen them for fifteen years, is very anxious to find them, and will be deeply grateful to any one who can give her any information that will help her in her quest, as she has tried every other means without success. One boy has brown hair and eyes, and the other has light hair and blue eyes. Please write to Eliza Miller, care of this magazine.

WYATT, OLIVER.—When last heard of he was in Joplin, Missouri. A friend would like to hear from him, and will appreciate any information that will lead to his communicating with him. Friend, care of this magazine.

MINER, MRS. E. T., and her daughters, Theresa and Nita. A relative who has lost sight of them since 1898 will be most grateful for any information. S. A. Austin, 816 Twentieth Street, Sacramento, California.

BLACKWELL.—I desire to communicate with some of the direct descendants of Cornal or Nathan Blackwell, who lived near the southeast corner of Franklin and Bedford Counties in the State of Tennessee about the year 1837. Box 403, Tullahoma, Tennessee.

WHITTIER STATE SCHOOL.—I am very anxious to correspond with any boy who was at the school from 1893 to 1897, inclusive, but particularly boys of Company "G." My object is the renewal of possible friendships, exchange of experiences after leaving school, et cetera. Boys, no matter where you are now, write to me. W. S. S., care of this magazine.

KACSMAR, JOE.—He is about six feet tall and has chestnut hair and dark-blue eyes, a round face, small nose and dark complexion. There is a scar on the left side of his nose and one on his left hand. There is important news for him from Europe, and any one who knows his address will do a favor by sending it. If he should see this, he is asked to write to Nick Bodner, R. F. D. 57, Box 114, Sharon, Pennsylvania.

KAUFFMAN, MRS. MABEL.—Her maiden name was Reynolds. Her husband was a veterinary surgeon at Humboldt, Kansas. After her divorce from him it was heard that she had married a man named Peterson and went to Rackford, Illinois. Her two daughters, Tassie and Bessie, are married and well, and would be glad to hear from their mother. If she sees this, she is asked to write to her daughter, Mrs. A. F. Hammack, Bentonville, Arkansas.

STORCH, FRANK.—His last address was care of Charles Votapka, Jennings, Kansas. I wish to communicate with him in regard to the death of his brother, a Czecho-Slovak soldier, in Siberia. F. Marsicek, care of this magazine.

SETHMAN, WILLIAM, who lived in Texas several years ago. A relative would like very much to communicate with him. H. G. S., care of this magazine.

CLAUS, HERMAN A.—When last heard from he was in Philadelphia. His daughter would like to hear from him. R. P. H., care of this magazine.

MARY.—I am back in New York. If you are willing to let the past be forgotten, and begin all over again, I am sure we can be happy and contented. Please write to me and I will answer at once. Daddy Dan, care of this magazine.

SCOTT, JOHN.—He is a miner, fifty-six years old, and was last heard of at Engle and Trinidad, Colorado, in February, 1905. Also **THOMAS SCOTT,** thirty-one years old, last heard of in 1916, and **WILLIAM SCOTT,** twenty-nine years old, who left Liverpool in August, 1919, for demobilization. Any information of these men will be gratefully received by the wife and mother, Mrs. John Scott, care of this magazine.

WOOTEN, AVRIL.—He left his home in McPherson, Kansas, in July, 1920. He is about sixteen years old. His mother is so worried about him that her health is very seriously impaired, and it is feared that she may not live if she does not get news of her son. Any one who knows where he is will greatly relieve her anxiety by writing to Mrs. Lilly Lane, care of this magazine.

FUERHARDT, CHARLES.—He was placed in the Gillis Orphan Home, Kansas City, Missouri, in 1884. His brother William, who was adopted, has been found. He and his other brother, Henry, are anxious to find Charles. They were all placed in the home at the same time. They would also like to find their father, or to hear from any one who can give them news of their brother Charles or their father. Please write to Henry Fuerhardt, care of this magazine.

HUGGARD, MIRTH.—Her sister has news for her and is very anxious to hear from her and to know how her little son, Jackie, is. She will be very grateful to any one who can send her their address. If Mirth should see this, she is asked to write to her sister at once. Mrs. G. A. Harrison, 1112 Market Street, San Francisco, California, Room 111.

J. L. D.—Your case is dismissed, and you are cleared. You can write openly or come home at any time. There is sad news at the old ranch home. Write at once and send your full address. Your mother, E. M. D.

BILLY A. K.—Please write to me as you promised. I am very unhappy.—F.

MERRITT, AMANDA and **EMMA.**—About 1906 they were sent to the South Georgia Home, in Macon, Georgia. Their brother, who was with them at that time, left in 1910. They have not been seen or heard of by him since. Any one knowing where they are will do a great favor by writing to their brother, M. Merritt, 2730 Sears Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

CATHERS, GEORGE.—He is between fifty and sixty years old, short and heavy set, and was last heard of in Illinois about twenty-one years ago. His son and daughter-in-law are seeking for him and will be deeply grateful to any one who can give them news of him. Please write to Mrs. F. K. Cathers, Drumright, Oklahoma.

KLAPPER, MRS. WALTER.—When last heard from she was in Schenectady, New York, three years ago, when she lived on Chapel Street. Any one who knows her present address will do a great kindness by sending it to Mrs. Dwight Coburn, 625 Sixth Street, Detroit, Michigan.

McKENSIE, MRS. MARY, who left Jefferson City, Missouri, about fifteen years ago, and went West. Any information that will help to find her will be gratefully received by her cousin, Mrs. James Olney, 90 Northwestern Round, Mason City, Iowa.

STRATTON, GRACE.—She left Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1918, and has not been heard from since. She has brown hair, gray eyes, and two gold front teeth. Any one who knows where she is will greatly oblige by writing to A. Davis, 2206 Leonard Street, Dallas, Texas.

ROBERTS, GEORGE.—He is about seventy-seven years old and was last heard of in Kingfisher County, Oklahoma, between 1890-92. His son will be glad to hear from any one who can tell him whether he is living or dead, where he is now if alive, or where he is buried if dead. Any assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated. Clyde Roberts, Bend, Oregon.

JOHNSON, MRS. D. M., who before her marriage was known as Alice Hunt or Alice Williams. She left her home in San Francisco on December 23, 1919, and although her husband has searched all over the country for her, he has been unable to find her or to get any trace of her. He begs her to return, and will be deeply grateful to any one who can give him a clew as to her whereabouts. He fears that some harm may have befallen her, as he knows of no reason why she should have gone away. **Private Donald M. Johnson, care of this magazine.**

McALLISTER.—The father and brother of Bobby McAllister, who wants to hear from them. They were last heard of in Seattle. Please write to Robert McAllister, care of this magazine.

LYNCH, MARGARET, who moved from West One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Street, New York, in September, 1919. Every effort to find her has failed, and her people are very much worried about her. She is asked to write to Mrs. H. J. Smith, Holbrook, Oregon, care of the Holbrook Logging Company, who says she is in a position to give her and her children a home.

BARNUM, CHARLES, who disappeared from his farm near West Toledo, Ohio, in 1897. His youngest child, Minerva Lavina, who is now married, would be glad to hear from her father or from any one who has known him and can give her news of him. Her mother has been dead many years. The father had three or four half-brothers, named Darling. He sometimes spelled his name Bonham. Also **WALTER BONHAM** and his sister **JULIA,** who were placed in the Children's Home in Miami, Ohio, in 1897-98, and were adopted soon after. Their only sister wants to find them, and will be thankful to any one who can give her news of any member of her family. Mrs. Cumberland, 752 East Yamhill Street, Portland, Oregon.

RYAN, JOHN.—He left the city of Limerick, Ireland, about 1886 and went to Chicago, where he worked in a packing plant. Six months later a daughter was born in that city, his wife having been left behind. He wrote home a few times and sent money to his family, but gradually ceased writing. His daughter, Ellen, married Henry Meaney. They are now both dead. They left two children, a boy and a girl, and this girl is now seeking news of her grandfather. She will greatly appreciate any assistance in procuring information about him. Please write to Mrs. J. M. Brinn, care of this magazine.

KENDALL, VAN.—He was born in Gilmanton, New Hampshire, and when last heard from was working on the docks in Boston, Massachusetts. An acquaintance would like to hear from him. Kenneth Sanborn, care of this magazine.

WILL, EMMA.—It is perfectly safe to write and give full address. We all love you and H. and want you to come home. Will send money for transportation. Son.

BLOOM, CHARLES H., formerly of San Francisco and last heard of in Reno, Nevada. He took his son, Herbert, six years old, from his mother in San Francisco, while she was filing papers for a divorce. The courts awarded her the custody of the child, but she has been unable to find him, although she has made every effort for over six months. The father is German and is a cook. The little finger of his left hand is missing. Any information that will help this distressed mother to find her child will be most gratefully received and always remembered. Mrs. Justine Bloom, care of this magazine.

SPAULDING, LESTER LUTHER.—He was a captain in the Canadian army and enlisted at Winnipeg. Military officials have no knowledge of his present whereabouts, and as there is news of great importance to his interests awaiting him, if any readers know where he is they will do a great favor by sending his address. He was supposed to have gone to Duluth. Please write to E. R. J., care of this magazine.

KELLY, IRA.—He was last heard of about fourteen years ago in Sioux, Iowa. His niece, Grace, whose mother was Mary Kelly before her marriage to Ira Rizon in 1897, is anxious to find her uncle, and will be glad to hear from any one who can give her any news of him. Mrs. Thomas Norton, Bend, Oregon.

WILLIAMS, ROBERT E. LEE.—He was last heard of in San Antonio, Texas, twenty-three years ago, when his brother received a letter from him saying he was sick and needed money. It was forwarded to him, but the letter was returned marked "Uncalled for." He is fifty-one years old, about five feet ten inches tall, of dark complexion, and had a slight injury on the inside corner of his left eye. If any one who knows what became of him, or who can give any news of him whatsoever, should see this, and will write to his brother, their kindness will be greatly appreciated. John S. Williams, care of this magazine.

McCLELEND, ESTELLA CHURCH.—She was born in Pavilion, New York, in 1866. She married Edward Forrest McClelend and went to New York City, where she was last heard from in 1913. Any information concerning her or her husband will be gladly received and highly appreciated by her brother, W. D. Church, 50 State Street, Newark, New Jersey.

PRICE, CHARLES W., formerly of Marion, Ohio, who is thought to be in California. His brother would like to hear from him. Private Virgil E. Price, Company F, Forty-ninth Infantry, Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

HUGHES, GEORGE M., formerly of Scranton, Pennsylvania. He enlisted in the army in 1912, and was with the Fourth Field Artillery, stationed at Texas City in 1914-15. An old friend would like to hear from him, and will be deeply grateful to any one who can send his address. M. S., care of this magazine.

SCHWARTS, HELEN S., sometimes known by her maiden name of Scherburn. When last seen she was living in Columbus, Ohio, and left there for Detroit, Michigan, about two years ago. She is a brunette, about five feet four inches tall, and rather plump. She had a cataract on one eye. Any information that will help to find her will be greatly appreciated by an old friend. XRBN, care of this magazine.

MERINAR, CHARLIE.—He was put in a children's home in Leatherwood, West Virginia, with his twin brother, Bennie, and his sisters, Bertha and Margaret. He wrote a card to Bertha about ten years ago from Watson, West Virginia, and has not been heard from since. He is now twenty years old. His sister, Elizabeth, would be very happy to hear from him or from any one who can give her news of him. Mrs. Elizabeth Danielson, Jackson, California.

POWERS, RICHARD J.—He came from Sydney, Australia, in 1907, and when last heard of was in San Francisco, in 1911. He is about five feet eight inches tall, weighs one hundred and thirty-five pounds, and has large dark-gray eyes with long, black lashes, and light-brown hair. An old friend would be glad to hear from him or from any one who knows him. Mrs. Charles Blaunt, care of this magazine.

HANEY, FRANK, formerly of the Sixty-sixth Regiment of Railroad Engineers, who was my pal at Camp Laurel, Maryland, and who was later with me in France, where we railroaded together, came home, and were discharged together on the 16th of July, 1919, since which time I have neither seen nor heard anything of him. He used to live on West Twenty-third Street, New York. Any one who knows his present address will do a favor by sending it to Chester Burke, 70 West One Hundred and First Street, New York City.

FULLER, DANIEL, who enlisted in Company B, Fiftieth Regiment, Ohio volunteers, on August first, 1862, at Lockington, Ohio, and was mustered out of service on June 26, 1865. His widow would like to hear from any of his old comrades and friends. Please write to Mrs. Dan Fuller, care of this magazine.

HOFFMAN, WILLIAM.—He is about fifty years of age and was last heard of in 1904, when he was thought to be a railroad man in the Southwest. His son would be glad to hear from him or from any one who can give news of him. R. E. Hoffman, care of this magazine.

BENGE, CHARLES.—When news was received of him last he was in Machine Gun Company, Fortieth Infantry, Camp Sherman, Ohio. His home was in Peabody, Tennessee. An old chum is very anxious to communicate with him and will greatly appreciate any news that will help to find him. Ike Thurman, 2155 Westminster Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

TATRO, CHARLES.—He left his home seventeen years ago and was last heard from in Vine Creek, Kansas. His daughter would be glad to hear from him or from any one who can give her news of her father. Please write to Bennie Tatro, care of this magazine.

FRENCH, BERT GORDON.—When last seen he was in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, in 1917. His home is in Los Angeles, but letters written to his family there have not been answered. Any one who knows his whereabouts will do a great favor by writing to his daughter, who will greatly appreciate any kindness shown to her in this matter. Mrs. Merle A. Daniels, 618 West Central Avenue, Orlando, Florida.

MAYHEW, LEE, who lived in Empire City, Oregon, in 1870, where his wife, Mary, was buried in 1870. When he left Coose Bay he placed his two little girls, Mary and Kate, with a family named Files. They would be glad to get any information of their father. J. Scott, care of this magazine.

WASHBURN, HAROLD D.—He was born in Nashville, Tennessee, during the Civil War and was last seen some fifteen years ago, when he had a home on Long Island, was married, and had one daughter. He is of medium height, with brown hair and eyes, and of athletic build. Any news of him will be gladly received by his aunt, who will greatly appreciate any communication that will give her a clew to his present whereabouts. Mrs. S. E. Hall, care of this magazine.

WHALEY, HARRY.—He left Columbus, Ohio, in 1915. He is asked to write to Paul at 1244 East Sixtieth Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

L. W. F., Kentucky. Please send your address to your wife. She wants to write to you. L. F., Schenectady, New York.

MANNING, FRANCES.—Her father was Walter H. Manning, a machinist, and she was last heard of in Cincinnati, Ohio. Also **ADELA GILMORE SANDERS,** last heard of in Galveston, Texas, about six years ago, and supposed to have gone to Mexico. She is about thirty-eight years old, and has chestnut hair and hazel eyes. Their cousin is anxiously seeking these two relatives and will be grateful for any news that will help her to find them. Mrs. Sadie W. Viertel, 315 North New Hampshire Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

BRINDEL, GEORGE EDISON.—He left home three years ago and went to Liverpool, England. He wrote home twice while he was there. The people he worked for said he had returned to this country, but nothing more has ever been heard from him. It was said that he went to Newport News. Any information that will help to find out what has happened to him will be very gratefully received by James H. Brindel, 530 Monmouth Street, Salem, North Carolina.

JOHNSON, CHARLOTTE.—She was married in Potsdam, New York, to Henry G. Hart, in 1869, and was last seen in Michigan about 1871. Important business makes it necessary to have the date of her death, if she is dead, or where she may be found if she is still alive. Any assistance in this matter will be fully appreciated. Please write to Mrs. M. L. Randall, Brookville, Florida.

PRESTON, JAMES, who left Liverpool, England, about thirty years ago and was heard of a few years later as being connected with a line of steamships sailing from Brooklyn, New York. His brother's son and namesake would be glad to hear of him or any member of his family, and will be grateful for any information that will help him in his search. James Preston, care of this magazine.

LATHAM, HARRY, formerly of Iron River, Wisconsin, a druggist, is asked to send his address to L. Shook, care of this magazine.

FINN, MRS. ELVIRA.—She is about forty-two years old and was last seen in Barberton, Ohio, six years ago. She is the daughter of John Timothy and Elvira Jones, of Hammerstown, Ohio. Her daughter is very anxious to get some news of her and will be thankful for any information. Bernice Finn, 759 Raymond Street, Akron, Ohio.

WAGNER, JOHN and **ARTHUR.**—John was in Schenectady when last heard of. Their brother is anxiously seeking them and will be very thankful for any information that will help to find them. Clarence Wagner, care of this magazine.

PIVER, SADIE and **MATTIE QUINN.**—About four years ago they were both living at Kingston, and Sadie had gone to Beaufort, North Carolina, when last heard of. If they should see this, they are asked to write to an old friend who is very anxious to hear from them. F. A. S., care of this magazine.

REYNOLDS, JOHN.—He is twenty years old, about six feet tall, and has fair hair. He left home about two years ago, and was last heard from in Galveston, Texas, about one year ago. He may be known by the name of Sanderson, his middle name. Any one who has seen him or who knows anything about him will do a great kindness by writing to his sister, Hazel Reynolds, care of this magazine.

WILKES, CLARENCE C.—If you should happen to see this, please write to your brother, Albert, who has some good news for you. Your father and mother are worrying about you. 48 Moore Avenue, your home town.

FOX, DORA PEARL.—She is the daughter of Raymond and Lillie Ida Fox and is twenty-three years old. She was last heard of at McGill, Oklahoma. Her sister would be very glad to hear from her or from any one who can tell her where she is. Mrs. Ola Bell Curtis, Henrietta, Texas.

GRICE, GERTRUDE MARY, who left England for Canada and the United States and is thought to be in New York City, is asked to write to her sister, Norah Irene Grice, care of this magazine.

BURNS, JIM.—He left Lafuente, Colorado, about fourteen years ago and was last heard of in Arizona. His brother would like to hear from him. Frank Burns, 627 Starr Avenue, Toledo, Ohio.

HARTSOUGH, MERRILL I., sometimes known as "Sox." He was last seen in Baltimore, Maryland, in November, 1919. He was twenty-one years of age, five feet seven inches tall, weighed one hundred and fifty pounds, and had dark-brown curly hair, blue eyes, a ruddy complexion, and a scar on his left cheek. Any information concerning him will be gratefully appreciated by his cousin, C. E. Broge, 409 East Preston Street, Baltimore, Maryland.

GRIMES, CHARLEY.—He left Pittsburg, Kansas, about seven years ago, when he was twenty years of age. He was five feet six inches tall, weighed about one hundred and forty-five pounds, and was of fair complexion. Any one who can give some news of him will do a favor by writing to Chris Hyatt, R. F. D. 6, Pittsburg, Kansas.

WILLIS, RALPH L.—Please write or come to me. I wih be in Denver after Christmas. Your broken-hearted wife, Lillian.

JACKSON, J. E.—He was last heard of in La Jara, Colorado, eight years ago. He is five feet eleven inches tall, weighs about two hundred pounds, and has brown hair and eyes. Any information about him will be gratefully received by his mother, Mrs. J. E. Jackson, Route 2, Box 61, Honey Grove, Texas.

PATTON, HAZEL, married name not known. Her last known residence was North Side, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She is asked to write to H. J., care of this magazine.

ALGUIRE, PERCY HILLIARD.—He left his home at Mille Roches, Ontario, Canada, ten years ago, and was last heard of in Regina, Saskatchewan, eight years ago. He is about five feet eight inches tall, of medium build, thirty-two years old, with dark eyes, a fair complexion, and red curly hair. If any one who has any knowledge of him will be so kind as to communicate with his brother, the favor will be greatly appreciated. Charles G. Alguire, 647 Dupont Street, Toronto, Canada.

FITZGERALD, HARRY.—He was in the navy and went around the world with the fleet about eight or ten years ago. He is thirty-eight years old, about five feet five inches tall, with dark hair and eyes and a fair complexion. When last heard of he had landed in California. His brother would like to hear from him or from any one who has known him and can tell him how to reach him. Please write to William Fitzgerald, Lynchburg, Virginia.

HALEY, JOHN.—His two sisters were placed with him in St. Mary's Infant Orphan Asylum, in Buffalo, New York. One girl was adopted by a family of Elmira, and has been dead for some years; the other was adopted in 1887, when she was three years old, by a family of Rochester. She has made many efforts to find her brother, but without success, and she can get no information from the home. She has been told that he is a traveling salesman for a New York silk firm, but she knows nothing definite. Neither does she know whether he is older or younger than she. The girls' names were Nellie and Mary Haley. The brother may be known by an adopted name. Any assistance in finding him will be gratefully appreciated by his sister, who is now married. Mary Haley, care of this magazine.

FUNK, CLARENCE M.—He was a member of O. N. G. Seventh Territorial Army, Columbus, Ohio, and was sent overseas in June, 1918. It was stated in the papers that he had died in November, 1918. A letter was returned to a friend stamped Camp Darius, Massachusetts. Any one who was at this camp and knew him will do a kindness by writing particulars to Hunter, care of this magazine.

McIVER, JOHN.—He was last heard of about 1902, when he kept a grocery store and was also postmaster in a small town in Wyoming. His nephew would be glad to get some news of him and will greatly appreciate any information. R. Astbury, 48 Jefferson Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

MARTIN, JOSEPH AMBROSE, who left Ayr, Scotland, about twenty-five years ago and went to Montreal, Canada. He was last heard from at Whitefish, Ontario, about sixteen years ago, when he was engaged as a lumberjack. His only living relative, his sister, Sarah Ann, died, leaving a daughter ten years old, whose father is anxious to find his late wife's brother, and hopes, if he should see this, that he will write to him. Charles Montoux, care of this magazine.

JONES, MERLIN, formerly of Champaign, Illinois. He left home when he was sixteen years old, and is now about twenty-four. He was of medium build, with light hair, blue eyes, and prominent front teeth. There was a scar on the back of his left hand in the form of the figure 8. He was of an adventurous disposition and is supposed to be in the Northwest. His mother, sisters, and brother miss him very much and will be deeply grateful to any one who can help them to find him. Please write to his sister, Mrs. Francois Baumgartner, 307 South Neil Street, Champaign, Illinois.

WIGMORE, MRS. MAUD, who married a man named Florence Vendig. She was last seen in St. John, New Brunswick, in 1900, and was in Chicago when last heard of. Her sister wants very much to hear from her and will be glad of any information. Mrs. Addie Ripley, 11 Jackson Street, Haverhill, Massachusetts.

WOLF, ROBERT F.—Please write to your old pal, Jim. James Murray, care of this magazine.

KELLY, MARY AGNES, sometimes known as May Burns, is asked to write to her old friend, W. Simmons, care of this magazine.

FYLOSKI, PETER, known to his friends as Skee. He is a sailor and visited York, Pennsylvania, some time in February, 1919. The parents of his buddy, Warren Rhoads, at whose home he stayed while in York, would be very glad of any information, as they have lost all trace of him. Warren also would like to hear from him. Please write to Mrs. William Rhoads, 707 Wallace Street, York, Pennsylvania.

SNELL.—Please let me hear from you. C. Z., care of this magazine.

DOLAN.—In the year 1892, John Dolan, when two weeks old, was placed in a home for orphans on East Sixty-eighth Street, New York City. He has blue eyes and sandy hair and a birthmark on his right eye. He was born on the 22d of May, 1892. He has not been able to find out anything about his parents, and would be happy to know that he had some relatives. If any one who sees this can give him information that will help him to get in touch with any of his people, they will do him a favor that will never be forgotten. John Dolan, care of this magazine.

REMMERS, WILLIAM.—He is twenty-eight years old, weighs one hundred and thirty-six pounds, and was a vaquero for P. L. S. Co. Harper outfit. He left a year ago for Boise, Idaho. Any news of him will be gladly received by his old pal, Buck E. Bennett, care of this magazine.

KNOX, THEO. W.—He is asked to kindly write to J. A. Knox, care of this magazine.

ALLEN, CHARLES K.—He is thirty-two years old, with dark hair and gray eyes. He was last heard from on July 26, 1920, in Kentucky, when he left the Zeidman & Pallie Carnival Company. Any information about him will be most gratefully appreciated by his mother, Mrs. Mary Allen, 502 Seventh Avenue, Phoenix, Alabama.

OLSON.—When I was about five years old I was sent to a manual-training school near Chicago, and from there I went to Fairmount, Minnesota, being adopted by some people named Douglas. At that time I had several relatives living in Chicago—a brother named William, a few years older than myself; my father, whose name is August Olson; my stepmother, and some uncles and aunts. I have not seen or heard from any of them since I left Chicago. I am now thirty-five years of age, and would be very thankful if I could get in touch with some of them. Any assistance from readers in finding my relatives will be greatly appreciated and remembered as long as I live. Frank Olson, care of this magazine.

TANDBERG, HENRY.—He was last heard of seven years ago, when he was living at 1663 Gilpin Street, Denver, Colorado. If he sees this, he is asked to write to his brother George, who will be glad to hear from any one who can tell him where Henry is. George Tandberg, Box 33, Burley, Idaho.

COMER, CLINT R.—He served with me in Company K, Thirty-first U. S. V. I., in the Philippines, and when last heard from was in South Africa during the Boer War. I shall greatly appreciate any information that will help me to find him. G. M. Dowler, 110 West Norwich Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

GATES, ELMER.—He is forty years old, about five feet ten inches tall, and has brown hair and eyes. He was last seen in Pontiac. Any one who knows where he is will do a great favor by writing to his sister, who is very anxious to communicate with him. Mrs. E. D. Taylor, care of this magazine.

KOZAK, CHARLES.—In September, 1914, he disappeared and has not been heard from since. At that time he made his home with his great-aunt in Cleveland, Ohio. His relatives are very anxious about him and will be deeply grateful to any one who can help them to find him. Please write to his aunt, Mrs. Anna M. Lewis, 1407 East Street, North Side, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

HASLIP, BERNARDINE, and **RUTH BROWN,** who lived in San Antonio, Texas, in 1910-11, and attended the Smith School, are asked to write to their friend, Mrs. Lillian Hansen Miller, 1115 South Glendale Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

McMULLEN, MRS. GRACE.—She is asked to write and give news of little Paul. Any one knowing where they are will do a favor by writing to Box 55, Oakton, Virginia.

LEVESQUE, JULES.—When he left his home he was twenty-two years old, five feet nine inches tall, with sandy hair and blue eyes. He was last heard from in Alberta, Canada, ten years ago. He may be known by the English form of his name, Bishop. His sister has very important news for him, and would be glad to hear from him or from any one who can tell her where he is. Mrs. Anna Berard, R. F. D. 155, Swansea, Massachusetts.

DE MATTOS, HARRY BURTON.—He was formerly a teller in the Dominion Bank in Toronto, Canada, and at one time was a member of the 48th Highlanders Battalion. He was last heard of in 1914, when he was in Ireland with the Count of Luxemburg Opera Company. It is thought that he may be in England now. Any news of him will be gratefully received by a friend who is anxious to get in touch with him. A. E. J., care of this magazine.

BUCK, SADIE, also known as Peg Johnson. She was married to an army sergeant in New York City in September, 1919. Her husband was taken to the army hospital on Staten Island. She is asked to send her address to Charles H. McC., care of this magazine.

CROTTY, FREDERICK HENRY.—He left England on the sailing ship "Idaho," and landed in San Francisco, California, on October 6, 1899, and has not been heard from since that date. He was tall and fair. His family will be very grateful for any information that will help them to find him or to know what has become of him. Miss Crotty, care of this magazine.

FLICK, DAVID CLARK, who ran away from his home at Parnassus over two years ago. His brother, who is now on the farm with his grandmother, is very anxious to hear from him. He has dropped the name of Flick, and is now known by his given names. He will be most grateful to any one who will help him to communicate with his brother. Please write to Carl Robison, care of this magazine.

ALEXANDER.—I was born on the 25th of July, 1875, at No. 18 Union Street, Rochester, New York. My mother deserted me when I was a few days old, and I was taken to the poorhouse. Shortly afterward I was adopted by a German, with whom I stayed until I was fourteen years old. My parents were supposed to be from Elmira, but I know nothing definite about them. I spent five years in France with the Canadian army, and when I came back from the war and saw my comrades met at the various stations by their parents, brothers, and sisters, who gave them a glad welcome home, I felt very lonesome, and I am now hoping that some kind reader may be able to help me to find somebody belonging to me. I shall be deeply grateful for any information about my people. Charles Alexander, care of this magazine.

ARMSTRONG, JANE, and her brothers, **ALEC, JAMES,** and **THOMAS.** They were born in County Cavan, Ireland. Their father's name was Adam. It is believed that James and Thomas went to America many years ago. Any information that will lead to communication with them will be greatly appreciated by their sister, who is now in Australia. Mrs. Sarah Joyce, care of this magazine.

MACALLIN, CARL H., formerly of the U. S. air service, is asked to send his address to Friend, care of this magazine.

J. E. H.—Write to Bill, 165 West One-hundred-and-second Street, New York City.

PELTZ, DORA.—She is about forty-two years old and was born in Niemirov, in the Government of Padobok, Russia. She was last heard of twenty-two years ago when she left London, England, and went to the United States, where she married. Her husband died about eighteen months later. Her married name is not known. Her brother is anxious to know where she is and will be grateful for any information that will help him to find his sister. Mark Peltz, care of this magazine.

ANTHONY, GLADYS MAHALA.—She was last heard from in Piqua, Ohio, in April, 1920. Her brother will be glad to hear from her or from any one who can give him news of her. William L. Antheny, care of this magazine.

THURMAN, O. K.—He is about forty years old and was in California when last heard from. He is asked to write to Private O. Davis, care of this magazine.

STUART, PEARL.—Some years ago she was in St. Louis, Missouri. Also **ALBERT S. FREEMAN,** formerly of Chicago, Illinois. An old friend would like to hear from these two persons, and will be grateful for any news of them. Roy Adams, 144 East Thirteenth Street, Erie, Pennsylvania.

LOCKHEART, first name not given. He was a shoe repairer in Forest Road, Walthamstow, England, and went to Canada in or about the year 1904. Any information about him will be greatly appreciated by William Lawton, Box 50, Post Office, Point Edward, Ontario, Canada.

HOPE, HAROLD.—If you see this, please come home or write to me. I am very anxious about you. Your aunt, P. Shaw.

BRISCOE, PAULINE, who chummed with Lillian in Philadephia. Pease write to me. P. Cohen, care of this magazine.

BACON, MRS. FRANKLIN.—She is short and of medium weight, with blue eyes and brown hair. She wears glasses and is slightly crippled, which causes her to limp on the right side. She has been missing for about a year. Dear mother, please write to me; I am lonesome for you and am in bad health, and want to see you or hear from you. Any information about her will be gratefully received by her son, Howard G. Baker, Jr., 7911 Detroit Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio.

ROGERS, MRS. NELLIE.—Her maiden name was Lovett, and she was born in England. She is twenty-seven years of age, five feet five inches in height, and has brown hair and blue eyes. She was last heard of in Toledo, Ohio, in February, 1919. There is important news for her and she is asked to write at once if she should see this. Any one who knows her whereabouts will do a great favor by writing to Mrs. Josephine Foster, 1018 Beech Street, Detroit, Michigan.

McDONALD, ROBERT JOHN.—He was last seen on October 25, 1905, in Hibbing, Minnesota, and was last heard from about Christmas time in 1907, when he wrote from Planters' Hotel, El Paso, Texas. When he went away from there he left no address. He had three brothers, Andrew, Tom, and Joe, who lived in Portland, Ontario. He was five feet three inches in height, weighed one hundred and forty-five pounds, and is now about sixty-five years of age. Any information will be gratefully received by his son. Dear dad, if you see this, write to me. Some grandchildren may help you to forget the past. Write to me, anyway. Your son Wilbert, care of this magazine.

ZALOVSKY, V. E. or **VILLI PERIAK.**—He was born in Prague about thirty-eight years ago, and was last heard of in Omaha, Nebraska. He is a cabaret performer and a painter. It is very important that he should be heard from, and he is asked to write at once. Any information regarding him will be most gratefully received by Rudolph Kristh, care of this magazine.

GEARY, JACK J., Corporal.—He is twenty-nine years old, five feet seven inches tall, well built, and weighs about one hundred and forty-five pounds. He was a member of Company A, Ninth Machine Gun Battalion, Third Division, A. E. F., and was last seen just before being seriously wounded in action at Crezancy, France, on July 15th, 1918. His home was in Boston, where he was a broker prior to his enlistment in 1917. An old buddie of his, who does not know what happened to him, and who has been trying to find him, but without success, will sincerely appreciate any information concerning this young man. He has fair, curly hair, light-blue eyes, and a fair, slightly freckled complexion. William S. Berg, care of this magazine.

McBROOM, ALBERT T.—He has been missing since June 15, 1919, and when last heard of was in the gold fields in California. His sister will greatly appreciate any news that will help her to communicate with him. Mrs. Hugh Hamblen, Box 173, Cashion, Arizona.

VANCE, VICTOR R., formerly company clerk of the Machine Gun Company, 321st Infantry, Eighty-first Division. It is believed that his home is in Los Angeles. He is asked to communicate with Sergeant Ralph Bergstein, care of this magazine.

McKINNIE, ALFRED.—He is colored but of light complexion, five feet six inches tall, with dark-brown, curly hair and gray eyes. He is thirty-five years old and is slightly lame through a wound received in service overseas. He has several gold teeth. He has been missing since September 16, 1919. His wife, who has two small children, will be very grateful for any information that will help her to know what has become of him. Mrs. Helen McKinney, care of this magazine.

CHILLO, ALBERT.—He is sixteen years old, five feet four inches tall, rather stout, with round face, black hair and eyes. He left home on August 2, 1920, to go to work, and has not been seen or heard from since. Any information that will lead to knowledge of his whereabouts will be a great relief to his mother, who is very ill over his absence. Please write to his brother, Joseph Chillo, 532 Eighteenth Street, Niagara Falls, New York.

HILES, WILLIAM.—His pal, who lived with him in Vineland, New Jersey, would be glad to hear from him, and hopes he will write and send his address. His home is in Cincinnati. James Coyle, care of this magazine.

HUGH, EDWARD.—He went to Spokane, Washington, some twenty years ago, where he bought a ranch. His wife's name was Sadie. His son, Arthur, is now twenty-seven years old. Any information will be gratefully received by his nephew, Earl Hugh, 4136 Twenty-fourth Street, San Francisco, California.

COLEMAN, GEORGE E.—He was last heard of when he went to Portland, Oregon, for the Shriners' convention, in June, 1919. He is about fifty years old, five feet nine inches tall, weighs about one hundred and fifty pounds, and has light hair and blue eyes. A friend would be glad to get his present address. V. E. King, 4136 Twenty-fourth Street, San Francisco, California.

HOLMAN, LUTHER HOWARD.—He is asked to write to his wife, who is very ill and is unable to work for her children. Any information that will help to find him will be gratefully received. Mrs. L. H. Holman, care of this magazine.

CALDWELL, MARY, who disappeared in 1913-14, and **LUTHER E. BROWN**, who boarded with J. W. Caldwell in 1911 and was last heard from in Madras, Georgia, in that year. I would be very glad to hear from either one of these persons. James Caldwell, Route One, Goggansville, Georgia.

BOOL, G. H.—He was last heard of just before demobilization of the R. A. F. at Toronto, in May, 1919, and was supposed to have gone to New York just after. His son would like very much to hear from him. A. A. Bool, care of this magazine.

GLACKEN, MRS. GEORGIA.—She was last seen in Cushing, Oklahoma. Any one who knows her present address will do a favor by sending it to J. E. J., care of this magazine.

COOMBS, THOMAS.—He is about fifty-two years old, five feet seven inches tall, and has a fair complexion. He was last heard of in Dallas, Texas. Any news of him will be gladly welcomed by his sister, Mrs. Carrie Murray, 270 Regina Street, Montreal, Canada.

JAMES, LOUIS, often called Jim. When last heard from he was with the 139th Division, Artillery, at Brest, France, in the spring of 1917. He is tall, with black hair and blue eyes. A friend would be glad to hear from him. P. L. B., care of this magazine.

ORTEGA, CHRISTOPHER.—I was taken from the Children's Home Society in Los Angeles, California, about 1908-09, and was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Andres Rangel. Mr. Rangel is now dead. So far as my adopted mother knows about me, I was born on March 23, 1900, and my mother's name was Mary Ortega. I would be glad to know if I have any living relatives, and will be deeply grateful to any one who can help me to communicate with any one of my own family. Chris Rangel, care of this magazine.

OWENS, WILLIAM and MAURICE, brothers, who left Bootle, near Liverpool, England, about thirty-two years ago. Maurice, when last heard of, was in Utica and was a plumber. William was supposed to be in Buffalo, New York, and was an engineer or molder. The son of their sister Maggie would like to hear from them. David, care of this magazine.

McCARTHY, A. JOHN.—When last heard from he was in Jersey City, about five years ago. His eldest son, Willie, would be glad to get some news of him, and will greatly appreciate any assistance in finding him. Willie M. McCarthy, care of this magazine.

MARTIN, LARRY, who lived in Tiona, Pennsylvania. His cousin, who has not heard from him for over twenty years, would be very glad to get news of him, and hopes if he sees this that he will write. Fritz Anderson, 596 East Third Street, rear, Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

COX, CLYDE.—He is sixteen years old, about five feet six inches tall, with a fair complexion and blue eyes. He left his home about a year ago, and his parents, who have made every effort to find him, are more than anxious to get news of him. They will appreciate any assistance from readers, and have great hopes that he may see this and write to them. Any information will be most gratefully received. A. L. Cox, care of this magazine.

SWEENEY.—Wherever you may be, write to mother, Calaveras, Texas.

NEILAS, WILLIAM and JAMES.—They were born in England, and went with their sister, Rose, to Huntington, Canada, thirty years ago. James was in the Salvation Army about eighteen years ago, and was last heard of at Sioux, Manitoba. He had light hair and blue eyes. William had dark, curly hair, dark eyes, and a very freckled face. If they should see this, they are asked to write to their sister, Mrs. Rose Sheffield, care of this magazine.

PATTERSON, MORRIS.—He was formerly a resident of Newark, New Jersey, and was last heard of in Houston, Texas. Any information as to his whereabouts will be thankfully received by H. J. Silverman, 40 Maple Street, Kearney, New Jersey.

JACK H.—Everything is forgiven. Send your address to this magazine, where there is a letter for you.

ENGLEBRETH, RUSSELL.—When last heard of he was living in Trenton, New Jersey. A friend would like to hear from him and will greatly appreciate any information that will lead to his present whereabouts. D. C. S., care of this magazine.

ELLISON, GOLDIE EMALINE.—She was last heard from in Milwaukee in 1900 or 1901. She is about thirty-seven years old. Her "baby" sister would be glad to hear from her or from any one who can tell her where she is. Mrs. Sylvia Russell, 121 Brainard Street, Detroit, Michigan.

WHETSTONE, EDNA.—Please write. I have lost your address, and would be glad to hear from you again. My address is the same.—R. B.

TOMLINSON, ADA.—She was born in England and is about forty years old. It is thought that she is now Mrs. E. Stone. Her brother will be very glad to hear from her, and asks her to write to him. Arthur Tomlinson, care of this magazine.

WHITE, JOSEPH B.—He was last heard from at San Bernardino, California, about twenty years ago. His brother would like to hear from him. Also **ANDY DOUGHER**, from Port Hudson or Port Hicks, Louisiana. His sister Katie would be glad to get his present address. Mrs. C. E. White, 2625 Lister Street, Kansas City, Missouri.

GOODMAN, HARRY.—Any one knowing his address will do a great favor by sending it to M. P., care of this magazine.

KIRK, FRANK.—He was formerly in the restaurant business at Houston, Texas, and is probably somewhere in Texas or California at the present time. His son will be deeply grateful to any one who will be kind enough to send him his address. Clyde Arthur Kirk, care of this magazine.

DEHART, BUCKEY.—He is a bridge builder and structural-steel worker, and was last heard from in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1916. Later it was heard that he was with the field artillery in France. He is asked to write to his home in Richmond, Virginia.—E. L. D.

CORDIN, JACK.—He was a member of the old Nineteenth Infantry Supply Co., and when last heard of was in the Fifty-seventh Infantry. He is asked to write to his old friend, E. A. Enderly, Corrigan, Texas.

BOLAND, RICHARD.—He left Philadelphia in April, 1920, for California, and it is not known where he is at this time. He is twenty-two years old and over six feet tall. Any one who knows him will do a great favor by writing to his wife, Mrs. R. Boland, care of this magazine.

AMIDON, HARRY C.—Any one who knows his present address, or who can give any news of him whatever, will do a great kindness by writing to H. W., care of this magazine.

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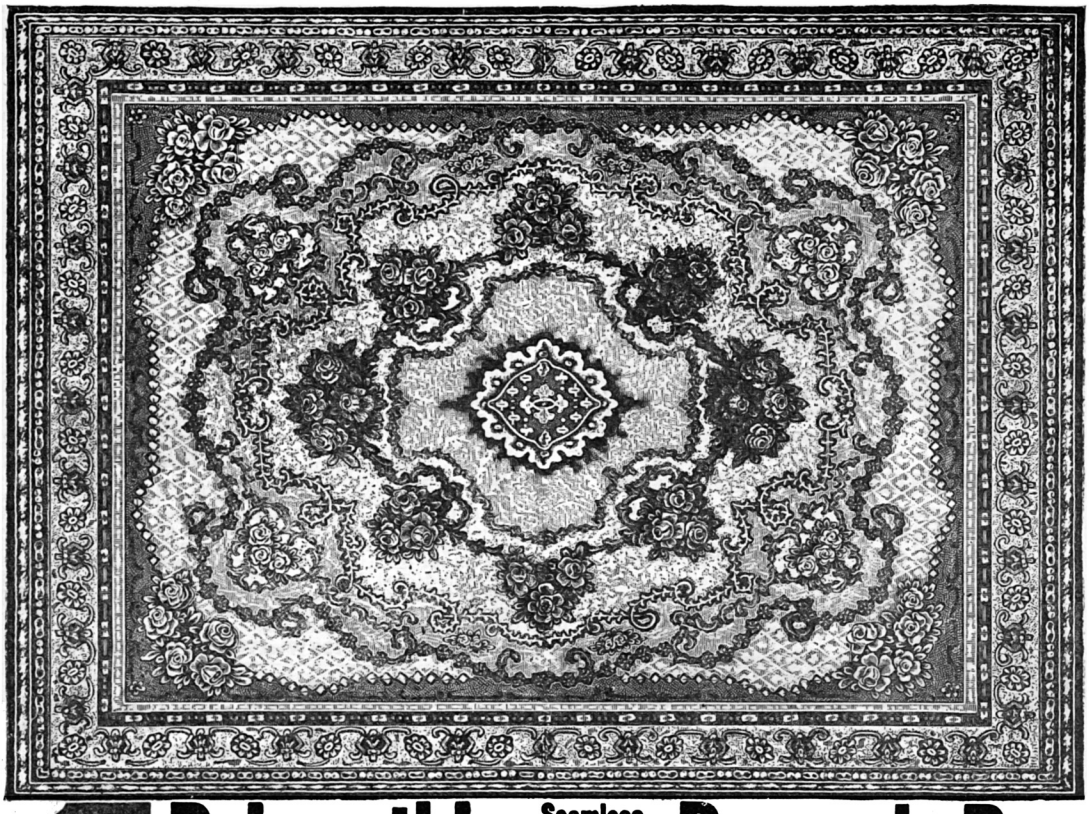

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3913 Wentworth Avenue
Dept. 3283 Chicago, Illinois

Enclosed is $1.00. Send the Rug No. 34CMA13. I am to have 30 days' trial. If not satisfied will ship it back and you will refund my $1 and pay transportation charges both ways. If I keep it, I will pay $2.75 each month until full price, $29.85, is paid. Title remains with you until final payment is made.

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Auto Owners WANTED!

To introduce the best automobile tires in the world. Made under our new and exclusive Internal Hydraulic Expansion Process that eliminates **Blow-Out—Stone-Bruise—Rim Cut** and enables us to sell our tires under a

10,000 MILE GUARANTEE

We want **an agent** in every community to use and introduce these wonderful tires at our astonishingly low prices to all motor car owners.

FREE TIRES for YOUR OWN CAR to a representative in each community. Write for booklet fully describing this new process and explaining our amazing introductory offer to owner agents.

Hydro-United Tire Co.
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My method is the only way to prevent the hair from growing again. Easy, painless, harmless. No scars. Booklet free. Write today, enclosing 3 stamps We teach Beauty Culture.

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"I can hear you with the MORLEY PHONE." It is invisible, weightless, comfortable, inexpensive. No metal, wires nor rubber. Can be used by anyone, **young or old.** The **Morley Phone** for the

DEAF

is to the ears what glasses are to the eyes. **Write for Free Booklet** containing testimonials of users all over the country. It describes causes of deafness; tells how and why the MORLEY PHONE affords relief. Over one hundred thousand sold.

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Send Us Your Name and We'll Send You a Lachnite

DON'T send a penny. Just say: "Send me a Lachnite mounted in a solid gold ring on 10 day's free trial." We will mail it prepaid right to your home. When it comes merely deposit $4.75 with the postman and wear the ring for 10 full days. If you, or any of your friends can tell it from a diamond, send it back and we will return your deposit. But if you decide to buy it—send us $2.50 a month until $18.75 has been paid.

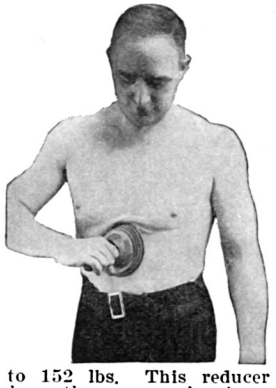
Write Today Send your name now. Tell us which of these solid gold rings you wish (ladies' or men's). Be sure to send your finger size.

Harold Lachman Co., 204 So. Peoria St., Dept. 1925 Chicago

Dr. Lawton's Guaranteed

FAT REDUCER

FOR MEN AND WOMEN



will show reduction taking place in 11 days or money refunded. The Reducer (not electrical) reduces unsightly parts promptly, reducing only where you wish to lose and the Lawton Method dissolves and eliminates superfluous fat from the system. Easily followed directions do not require exercises, starving, medicine or treatments; not only rids you of fat but improves appearance and general health, brings physical and mental vigor and enables you to regain and retain your normal weight. Dr. Lawton (shown in picture) reduced from 211 to 152 lbs. This reducer and genuine method have been the means whereby a great number of fat people throughout the United States and elsewhere have easily gotten rid of unhealthy, disfiguring fatty tissue without discomfort. Any stout man or woman can obtain these results whether 10 or 100 lbs. overweight, look better and feel better. The complete cost is $5.00. Send for your reducer today. Remember it is guaranteed. Office hours 10-4 daily.

Dr. Thomas Lawton, 120 West 70th St., Dept. 188, New York

$2.50 —A— MONTH!

19 Jewel Railroad Quality

This month's Bulletin smashes the terms—boosts the quality, lowers the price. No security—no interest. We trust you.

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HARRIS-GOAR COMPANY
Dept. 651 KANSAS CITY, MO.

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Clifton Double Tread Tires are noted for their long wearing qualities. **All are standard makes** reconstructed in our own factory by experts. 6,000 mile guarantee. These wonderfully long wearing tires must go at

SMASHED PRICES

30x3	$ 6.90	34x4	$11.10
30x3½	7.95	34x4½	12.25
32x3½	8.75	35x4½	12.75
31x4	9.85	36x4½	13.25
32x4	10.35	35x5	14.00
33x4	10.80	37x5	14.25

Free Tube & Reliner

State size wanted S. S. or Cl. Non-Skid or plain tread. Send only $2.00 deposit, balance C. O. D. subject to examination. **Satisfaction Guaranteed. Order To-day—Supply Limited.** 5% discount if cash is sent with order.

CLIFTON TIRE CO.
3536 Ogden Ave. Dept.42-ACHICAGO, ILL.

DEAF?

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We do not expect those who are hard of hearing to take our word that the Acousticon will make them hear clearly once more—No one's word should be taken for that. We do expect, however, that for their own individual satisfaction, before giving up in discouragement, they will permit us to loan them the

1921 Acousticon
For 10 Days' FREE TRIAL
No Deposit—No Expense

400,000 delighted users have given us this permission to their relief and profit. Most of them had tried many other aids and treatments without avail—But the Acousticon has patented features which cannot be duplicated. So disregarding your past experiences, write for your free trial today.

Dictograph Products Corp.
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Wear a LIZNITE GEM RING and be the envy of your friends. See if you can tell it from a high priced diamond. Send your Name, Address and Number of Ring you select, and one of these wonderful LIZNITE GEM RINGS, with all the fire and sparkle of the finest diamond will be sent you by return mail.

Solid Gold Mountings

And all rings are hand engraved, set with full carat weight LIZNITE GEM.

Select the one you like best:

No. 1—$21.50 2—$17.50 3—$15.50
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Size must be included when ordering. When your LIZNITE GEM RING comes pay the mail man $4.50, balance $5.00 monthly until paid. Money back any time within 10 days if not perfectly satisfied.

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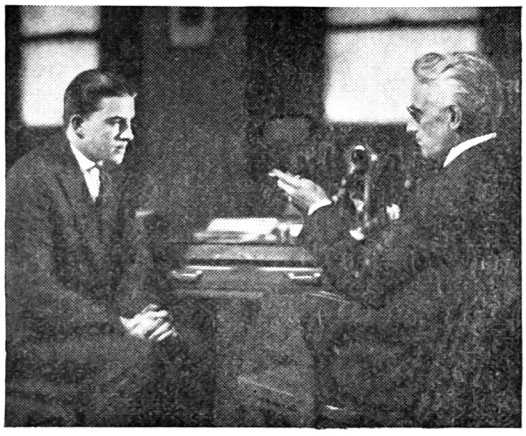

"The Job is Yours— on one Condition!"

For a long time I watched the young men who came into this business. Some stood still—stayed right where they started. Others climbed—made each job a stepping stone to something better.

"Now, what was the difference? Well, I investigated and found out. The men who were getting ahead had been devoting part of their spare time to study with the International Correspondence Schools. Today they are earning four or five times—yes, some of them *ten* times as much money as when they came with us.

"So we are looking for young men who care enough about their future to devote part of their time to preparation for advancement.

"And I'll give you this job on one condition—that you will take up a course of special training. Let the I. C. S. help you for one hour after supper each night and your future in this business will take care of itself."

Employers are begging for men who really want to get ahead and are willing to prove it by training themselves in spare time to do some one thing well.

Prove that you are that kind! The International Correspondence Schools are ready to help you prepare for advancement in the work of your choice, whatever it may be. More than two million men and women in the last 29 years have taken the I. C. S. route to more money. Find out what there is in this proposition for you. Here is all we ask: Without cost, without obligating yourself in any way, simply mark and mail this coupon.

TEAR OUT HERE

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
BOX 3005-C **SCRANTON, PA.**

Explain, without obligating me, how I can qualify for the position, or in the subject, *before* which I mark X.

- ☐ ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
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- ☐ Mechanical Draftsman
- ☐ Machine Shop Practice
- ☐ Toolmaker
- ☐ Gas Engine Operating
- ☐ CIVIL ENGINEER
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping
- ☐ MINE FOREMAN OR ENGINEER
- ☐ STATIONARY ENGINEER
- ☐ Marine Engineer
- ☐ Ship Draftsman
- ☐ ARCHITECT
- ☐ Contractor and Builder
- ☐ Architectural Draftsman
- ☐ Concrete Builder
- ☐ Structural Engineer
- ☐ PLUMBING AND HEATING
- ☐ Sheet Metal Worker
- ☐ Textile Overseer or Supt.
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- ☐ Pharmacy
- ☐ BOOKKEEPER
- ☐ Stenographer and Typist
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- ☐ Commercial Law
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- ☐ Window Trimmer
- ☐ Show Card and Sign Ptg.
- ☐ SALESMANSHIP
- ☐ CIVIL SERVICE
- ☐ Railway Mail Clerk
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- ☐ BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
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- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Teacher
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Present Occupation_____ Business Address_____
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1-1-21

Genuine Aspirin

Take Tablets without Fear if you see the "Bayer Cross"

For Headache
Pain, Colds
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Toothache
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Insist upon a "Bayer package," which contains safe, proper Directions. Proved safe by millions.

Bayer-Tablets of Aspirin

"Bayer" introduced Aspirin to physicians 20 years ago.

Handy tin boxes of 12 tablets cost but a few cents—Larger packages.
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Illinois Monarch
19 Jewels

19 genuine Ruby and Sapphire jewels, solid gold center wheel, adjusted to positions, isochronism and temperature. Includes such railroad requirements as double roller escapement, steel escape wheel. Stem set guaranteeing absolute satisfaction. Substantial, guaranteed 20-year 12 or 16 size gold filled case. Sent without a penny down.

10 Days Free Trial

Wear this splendid watch 10 days free. No obligation. If you decide not to buy return it at our expense.

Chain and Knife FREE

A handsome, up-to-date, gold-filled chain and knife absolutely free. Choice of Dickens, Vest or Waldemar (shown in cut) chain. State which chain you wish.

14c a Day

Just send your name and address. The watch, chain and knife come to you by prepaid express. Give expressman $8.60. This is merely a deposit. Wear the watch and chain 10 days. Then if you don't wish to keep it return it at our expense and your deposit will be refunded instantly. You are not out one penny. Trial is absolutely free. If you keep the watch pay $4.30 a month until full price, $42.75 is paid.

Order Today on Trial

The supply is limited. Send your name now. No red tape or annoyance. You take no risk. Take this chance to have this splendid watch for less than 14c a day. Send your name now.

J. M. LYON & CO. Dept. 1925 1 Maiden Lane NEW YORK

Stop Using a Truss

Yes, stop it, you know by your own experience it is only a make-shift, a false prop against a collapsing wall, and that it is undermining your health. Why, then, continue to wear it? Here is a better way, which means that tiresome, torturous trusses can be thrown away forever, and it's all because **Stuart's PLAPAO-PADS** are **different**, being **medicine** applicators made self-adhesive purposely to prevent slipping and to afford an arrangement to hold the parts securely in place.

NO STRAPS, BUCKLES OR SPRINGS ATTACHED, cannot slip, so cannot chafe or press against the pubic bone.

Thousands have treated themselves in the privacy of the home, and report most obstinate cases cured—no delay from work. **Soft as velvet—easy to apply—inexpensive.** Process of recovery is natural, so afterwards no use for trusses. Awarded Gold Medal International Exposition, Rome; Grand Prix, Paris. Write us today to prove it by sending TRIAL PLAPAO, FREE. Address, **Plapao Laboratories, Block 27, St. Louis, Mo.**

Shave, Bathe and Shampoo with one Soap.—Cuticura

Cuticura Soap is the favorite for safety razor shaving.

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DIAMONDS WIN HEARTS

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Has the appearance of costing double the price we are asking. All White Gold, resembling platinum. No. 219 now offered at

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Also special bargains in other new engraved pierced Rings, and Diamond LaVallieres, Bar Pins, Ear Screws, Scarf Pins, Watches, Wrist Watches, etc.

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Eight exquisite styles to choose from and the one you select will be sent to you on

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If you like the piano we will sell it to you on small monthly payments to suit your convenience as low as $9 per month. No cash deposit asked. No interest on payments. No extras of any kind. Stool free with piano. Write today for our catalog, illustrated in the natural colors of the wood. It's free. If you are interested in player-pianos send for free catalog. We have a fine selection. **Rothschild & Co.**, Dept. 30 **Chicago**

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IT is genuine economy to buy Ivory Garters. They wear evenly, because they are *all elastic*. There is no metal to rust thru the fabric—no dead cloth or pads. The durable weave and live, springy elastic make them last almost indefinitely. Even after months and months of excellent service, you'll find they are a bit frayed, maybe, but still lively and comfortable.

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Ask for Ivory Garters. Don't ever say "a pair of garters". Say "Ivory Garters". You'll find that it pays every time!

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NEW ORLEANS, U. S. A.

Ivory Garter
REGISTERED U.S. & FOREIGN

Boss

Trade Mark

This Trade-mark identifies genuine Boss Work Gloves. Be sure it is on every pair you buy.

Boss Work Gloves in the garden

YOU have all of the fun and none of the blisters when you wear Boss Work Gloves for gardening. They protect your hands from dust, dirt, and minor injuries.

Boss Gloves are tough enough for the most rugged work. Yet, they are so flexible that you can wear them to pull the smallest weeds.

Around the auto, too, Boss Gloves are useful in a dozen ways. They are made of the finest quality white canton flannel. In sizes for men and women, boys and girls. Ribbed, band, and gauntlet wrists. Your dealer sells them.

***THE BOSS* MEEDY** — best quality, medium weight canton flannel.

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The Boss line includes highest quality leather-palm, jersey, ticking, and canton flannel gloves and mittens.

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Kodak as you go.

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"HANDY GRIP"

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

SHAVING STICK

The Chief Says:

"I USED to make shaving a hard job, rubbing the lather in with my fingers and getting all mussed up.

"But, away back in 1903, I was told that I could get rid of the rub by shaving with Colgate's. I tried it, and I've been shaving with Colgate's ever since.

"The lather works up quickly under the brush, and leaves my face cool and refreshed.

"The 'Handy Grip' is a big help, too. When I need a new Shaving Stick I buy a Colgate 'Refill' for the price of the soap alone.

"Putting a 'Refill' into the 'Handy Grip' is as easy as screwing a new electric bulb into a socket. The soap itself is threaded. There's no waste.

"Try my plan. Shave with Colgate's and be on good terms with your face."

Colgate's Shaving Stick not only produces the most soothing lather for the average man but it is a little more economical in use than powder and much more economical than cream. As we make all three, we can give you this impartial advice.

COLGATE & CO.
Dept. C
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The metal "Handy Grip", containing a trial size stick of Colgate's Shaving Soap, sent for 10c. When the trial stick is used up you can buy the Colgate "Refills", threaded to fit this Grip.

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